



NEWS RELEASE

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San Diego's Life Sciences Ecosystem Faces Federal Funding Crisis: Prebys Foundation Announces \$7 Million in Emergency Support for Biomedical Research

San Diego, CA — May 28, 2025 — As federal funding for medical and life sciences research faces deep and destabilizing cuts, Prebys Foundation is stepping in with a rapid response package totaling \$7 million to defend San Diego's biomedical research sector—one of the world's leading innovation hubs.

Federal grants have historically provided nearly half of all medical research funding in the United States. This support has enabled transformative advances in drug discovery, fueled job growth, and secured America's position as a global leader in the life sciences. In San Diego, the impact has been profound, home to internationally renowned research institutes, universities, and biotech startups that together make up a biomedical ecosystem unlike any other in the country.

But that ecosystem is now under severe strain. In confidential conversations with the Prebys Foundation, leaders across the medical research field shared frank and urgent concerns about the future of their work. These quotes are presented without attribution to protect the identities of those who spoke candidly under an agreement of anonymity:

"The suction of talent is real. People need to understand that the NIH and U.S. taxpayers have invested billions in training scientists, and now we're losing them—often for pennies on the dollar—to countries like Sweden and China that have the infrastructure to support robust research programs."

"As of now, few grants have been awarded in 2025 - the pipeline is dry and constricted. Most research spans five years and is funded on a rolling basis each quarter—but this year, even renewals that should have been routine are disappearing."

Executive orders and steep reductions in federal research investment are threatening critical local initiatives, halting active projects, and forcing early- and mid-career scientists to look abroad or leave the field altogether. Without swift and targeted action, the region risks an exodus of talent and a slowdown in the medical breakthroughs that improve lives and drive the economy.

“San Diego’s biomedical research institutions aren’t just world-class in reputation—they deliver real impact by tackling urgent problems and advancing the treatments and cures the world needs,” said Grant Oliphant, CEO of the Prebys Foundation. “While we can’t match the scale of federal investment, we can respond with urgency to help prevent the loss of extraordinary talent and critical momentum. This is a defining moment, and philanthropy must rise to meet it.”

To address the immediate need, Prebys Foundation is awarding grants to seven anchor institutions:

- La Jolla Institute for Immunology – \$1,000,000
- Rady Children’s Hospital Foundation – \$1,000,000
- Salk Institute for Biological Studies – \$1,000,000
- San Diego State University – \$1,000,000
- Sanford Burnham Prebys Medical Discovery Institute – \$1,000,000
- Scripps Research – \$1,000,000
- University of California San Diego – \$1,000,000

The grants will provide general operating support aimed at retaining early and mid-career scientists at risk of being lost to the field, as well as supporting key research programs.

“This is not just about science—it’s about our economy, our global leadership, and the health of future generations,” said Oliphant. “This funding was an emergency allocation above and beyond our planned giving for the year. We urge other funders and stakeholders to join us in going above traditional spending allocations to help preserve the excellence and impact of San Diego’s life sciences community.”

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About Prebys Foundation

The Prebys Foundation—pronounced Preh-Biss—is a charitable foundation based in San Diego County. We are dedicated to advancing a vibrant, equitable, and resilient future for all San Diegans by investing in four key areas: health and well-being, medical research, arts and culture, and youth success.

While we operate under both Prebys Foundation and The Conrad Prebys Foundation as our DBAs, we use “Prebys Foundation” in our branding to keep things concise, accessible, and aligned with our forward-facing identity.