



NIH Biosafety Modernization Initiative Engagement Summary
Association of Public Health Laboratories Biosafety and Biosecurity
Committee
February 25, 2026

Background

NIH announced its Biosafety Modernization Initiative in Fall 2025 and began an expansive plan for engaging stakeholders. In addition to holding six regional listening sessions, NIH also participated in smaller engagements to gather individual input to help inform a new NIH biosafety policy.

The Association of Public Health Laboratories (APHL), an organization that represents state and local governmental health laboratories that monitor, detect and respond to health threats, invited NIH to give a presentation on the Biosafety Modernization Initiative to its Biosafety and Biosecurity Committee.

Event Summary

NIH provided an overview of the goals of the Biosafety Modernization Initiative followed by a discussion where APHL members provided individual opinions.

Discussion focused on:

- Impact of the new policy framework on public health labs and what is considered “research” under this policy, especially given proposed expansion beyond recombinant and synthetic agents.
- The importance of coordination across the Federal government since public health labs are subject to interlocking regulations from Food and Drug Administration (FDA), Occupational Safety and Health Administration (OSHA), etc.
- Emphasis on the importance of calibrating oversight based on data received from incident reports that the NIH receives under the NIH Guidelines for Research Involving Recombinant or Synthetic Nucleic Acid Molecules.
- Whether additional resources will be needed to support any changes to the current biosafety oversight framework.



NIH thanked individuals for their comment and encouraged APhL members to continue providing feedback through the mechanisms listed on the NIH Office of Science Policy website.