



NIH Biosafety Modernization Initiative Engagement Summary
Fred Hutchinson Cancer Research Center
Institutional Biosafety Committee (IBC)
February 3, 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.

NIH met with the Fred Hutchinson Cancer Research Center IBC, which oversees high-containment research and clinical trials involving human gene transfer.

Event Summary

Staff from the Fred Hutchinson Cancer Research Center gave a presentation that discussed how they assess risk. The presentation also provided details of experiments that may require NIH review, those that may require IBC review, and those that potentially do not warrant oversight under the policy.

Additionally, attendees provided individual feedback on several topics, including some of the following comments and input:

- Coordination with federal partners will be important to ensure a consistent approach to biosafety oversight that minimizes gaps.
- Expanding the scope to include wild-type organisms is appropriate from a risk-based perspective.
- Some human gene transfer experiments pose little biosafety risk, but other trials have biosafety risks that should be mitigated.

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