



**NIH Biosafety Modernization Initiative Engagement Summary
Houston Methodist Institutional Biosafety Committee (IBC)
February 13, 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 Houston Methodist IBC, which oversees a large number of clinical trials involving human gene transfer.

Event Summary

In discussing the Biosafety Modernization Initiative, IBC members provided individual feedback on several topics, including some of the following comments and input:

- Expanding the scope to include wild-type organisms, which the IBC is already reviewing through a separate committee, is appropriate from a risk-based perspective.
- Certain human gene transfer experiments that pose little to no biosafety risk may not require review by the full IBC. However, human gene transfer trials that pose a biosafety risk should still be reviewed and approved by the IBC.
- It would be appropriate to empower the institution to make containment lowering decisions in certain circumstances.
- Cross-membership between the Institutional Review Board (IRB), Institutional Animal Care and Use Committee (IACUC), and IBC would help increase parity between these committees.

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.