To amend the Public Health Service Act to authorize the Director of the National Institutes of Health to make awards to outstanding scientists, including physician-scientists, to support researchers focusing on pediatric research, including basic, clinical, translational, or pediatric pharmacological research, and for other purposes.

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

JUNE 8, 2021

Mr. JOYCE of Pennsylvania (for himself and Ms. SCHRIER) introduced the following bill; which was referred to the Committee on Energy and Commerce

A BILL

To amend the Public Health Service Act to authorize the Director of the National Institutes of Health to make awards to outstanding scientists, including physician-scientists, to support researchers focusing on pediatric research, including basic, clinical, translational, or pediatric pharmacological research, and for other purposes.

1 Be it enacted by the Senate and House of Representa-
2 tives of the United States of America in Congress assembled,
3 SECTION 1. SHORT TITLE.
4 This Act may be cited as the “Pediatricians Accelerate Childhood Therapies Act of 2021” or the “PACT Act of 2021”.


SEC. 2. TRANS-NIH AWARDS FOR EARLY-CAREER PEDIATRIC RESEARCHERS.

Part G of title IV of the Public Health Service Act (42 U.S.C. 288 et seq.) is amended by adding at the end the following new section:

“SEC. 489A. TRANS-NIH AWARDS FOR EARLY-CAREER PEDIATRIC RESEARCHERS.

“(a) IN GENERAL.—The Director of the NIH shall make awards to outstanding scientists, including physician-scientists, to support early-career researchers focusing on pediatric research, including basic, clinical, translational, or pediatric pharmacological research.

“(b) PRIORITY RESEARCH POPULATIONS.—In carrying out subsection (a), the Director of NIH may prioritize the issuance of awards to applicants who—

“(1) are individual researchers presenting qualifying applications and representing populations that have been historically underrepresented in pediatric medical research, including women and underrepresented racial minorities; or

“(2) are institutions of higher education that are eligible to receive funds under part A or B of title III of the Higher Education Act of 1965, part A or B of title V of such Act, or subpart 4 of part A of title VII of such Act, or research institutions partnering with such institutions of higher education.
to offer programs to support early-career pediatric researchers.

“(c) PRIORITY RESEARCH TOPIC AREAS.—In carrying out subsection (a), the Director of NIH, in consultation with the Director of the Eunice Kennedy Shriver National Institute of Child Health and Human Development and the directors of other national research institutes and national centers that participate within the Trans-NIH Pediatric Research Consortium, shall—

“(1) establish priority research topic areas, informed by external stakeholders, including research institutions, research societies, patient organizations, and industry; and

“(2) consider opportunities to align such priority pediatric research topic areas with current and future priorities of the National Institutes of Health, including—

“(A) pediatric and adolescent mental and behavioral health, including addiction medicine;

“(B) childhood cancer;

“(C) precision medicine, genetics, and genomics;

“(D) rare diseases and disorders, such as sickle cell disease, and other diseases and dis-
orders with significant unmet training needs;
and

“(E) fetal, placental, and neonatal develop-
ment.

“(d) REQUIREMENTS.—The Director of NIH—

“(1) shall require recipients of awards under
this section to use such awards to support pediatric
research activities, including costs associated with
laboratory staff and other costs associated with the
conduct of research; and

“(2) may allow recipients of awards under this
section to use such awards for costs associated with
receiving guidance and training from senior re-
searchers and mentors, as necessary to help such re-
cipients reach a state of research independence, in-
cluding conferences and other meeting participation.

“(e) SUPPLEMENT, NOT SUPPLANT.—Awards made
under this section shall be used to supplement, and not
supplant, other funding for pediatric research and pedi-
atric training.”.

SEC. 3. TRANS-NIH PEDIATRIC CONSORTIUM.

Title IV of the Public Health Service is amended by
inserting after section 409D (42 U.S.C. 284h) the fol-
lowing new section:
“SEC. 409D–1. TRANS-NIH PEDIATRIC CONSORTIUM.

“(a) Establishment.—The Director of NIH shall establish and maintain a consortium to be known as the Trans-NIH Pediatric Research Consortium (in this section referred to as the ‘Consortium’) to coordinate pediatric research programs across the National Institutes of Health.

“(b) Membership.—The members of the Consortium shall consist of representatives of multiple national research institutes and national centers.

“(c) Chair.—The Chair of the Consortium shall be the Director of the Eunice Kennedy Shriver National Institute of Child Health and Human Development (or the Director’s designee).

“(d) Duties.—In coordinating pediatric research programs across the National Institutes of Health, the Consortium shall—

“(1) establish pediatric research priorities;

“(2) identify gaps and opportunities for research collaborations involving multiple national research institutes and national centers; and

“(3) identify opportunities to develop the next generation of pediatric researchers.

“(e) Consultation.—The Consortium shall consult regularly with external experts in the field of pediatric re-
search, including children’s hospitals, children’s research institutions, patient organizations, and other stakeholders.

“(f) REPORTING.—Beginning one year after the date of enactment of the Pediatricians Accelerate Childhood Therapies Act of 2021 and every 2 years thereafter, the Consortium shall submit to Congress, and make publicly available on the website of the National Institutes of Health, a report on—

“(1) any research project involving pediatrics and involving more than one Institute or Center that was supported during the review period;

“(2) any strategic initiatives that include a significant pediatric component;

“(3) career development awards for early-career researchers focused in pediatrics, including specific numbers of awards and amount of funding, made during the review period;

“(4) details on the composition of awards for early-career researchers, including demographic details indicating the proportion of recipients from populations that have been underrepresented in pediatric medical research; and

“(5) such other information as the Director of NIH determines appropriate.”.