

# PRESS STATEMENT

**A DANGEROUS DEFICIT:**  
COALITION CALLS FOR  
EMERGENCY FUNDING TO  
SAVE KENYA'S HEALTH  
RESEARCH

PREPARED BY:

**COALITION FOR HEALTH RESEARCH AND DEVELOPMENT  
(CHREAD)**



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## A DANGEROUS DEFICIT: COALITION CALLS FOR EMERGENCY FUNDING TO SAVE KENYA'S HEALTH RESEARCH

7 July 2025 – Nairobi: The Coalition for Health Research and Development (CHReaD) today issues a grave concern: Kenya's declining investment in health research, development, and innovation is putting the nation's health security at severe risk. This trend threatens a critical shortage of locally produced life-saving medical solutions and jeopardizes our capacity to respond to emerging health threats.

While the overall health sector funding in the 2025/26 budget has increased from KSh127 billion in 2024/25 to 138.1 billion, allocations for health research remain alarmingly inadequate. The Kenya Medical Research Institute (KEMRI) received only about KSh 2.7 billion for recurrent costs and a mere KSh 40 million for laboratory upgrades, a drastic reduction from the KSh 2.5 billion recurrent and KSh 537 million allocated in 2024/25. This leaves little room to sustain or launch critical research initiatives.

Equally concerning is that the National Research Fund (NRF), the body mandated to finance Kenya's research and innovation, received no allocation whatsoever, compared to KSh218.7million in the 2024/25 budget. This funding gap threatens hard-won gains made in combating infectious diseases, chronic illnesses, neglected tropical diseases, drug-resistant pathogens. It also undermines Kenya's capacity to respond to future health emergencies

The withdrawal of traditional international donors such as USAID has further compounded the crisis, resulting in the loss of over \$220 million funding for health research development and innovation. Clinical trials are stalling, surveillance systems weakened, and we risk losing our top scientists to brain drain. Kenya's ability to diagnose, treat, and respond effectively to public health threats will deteriorate.

Health research is not a cost; it is a high-return investment with proven economic benefits. Research, every shilling in Kenya invested in health research and development yields KSh 2.40 in short-term returns and KSh 4.72 in long-term gains. Failure to invest now represents both a missed economic opportunity and a critical threat to future health security and pandemic preparedness.

CHReaD calls for immediate action in three areas:

- 1. Emergency Budget Amendment:** Parliament should urgently allocate targeted research funds to KEMRI and NRF in the upcoming supplementary budget. These should cover operational research, clinical trial support, and innovation grants.
- 2. Implementation of SHA Act Reform:** We support the amendment proposed by KEMRI to allocate 0.1% of Social Health Authority (SHA) monthly collections to fund research institutions to safeguard these institutions from declining donor support which institutions heavily rely on. This will ensure sustainable, predictable financing for health research and institutionalise research as an essential pillar of Health system in Kenya under SHA.
- 3. Support for Market Access and Commercialization:** As the largest buyer of health technologies, the government must prioritize procurement of locally developed innovations. Additionally, the Science, Technology, and Innovation (STI) Act, 2013 should be reviewed to empower KEMRI, the NRF and other institutions to commercialize research and generate sustainable revenue.

Kenya must act now. The choice is clear: invest in health research development and innovation today or bear the devastating cost of neglect tomorrow.

**ENDS**

CHReaD, hosted by Amref Health Africa, brings together 38 organizations working to strengthen health research, development, and innovation in Kenya. Since 2015, CHReaD has championed policies that drive research, support local innovation, and improve access to life-saving health technologies.

Amref Health Africa in Kenya is a leading non-profit organisation that focuses on improving health in Africa. Founded in 1957, we have worked with communities for over six decades to enhance their health. Amref is committed to achieving lasting change in Africa by empowering communities and their health systems to overcome obstacles to primary health care. In Kenya, we have a presence in all 47 counties. Through partnerships with civil society organisations, development agencies, and national and county governments, we positively impacted the lives of over 30 million people between 2018 and 2022.

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