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[00:00:51] **Speaker 1** In other news, a Trump administration policy to limit the overhead expenses of medical research has powerhouse research universities like UW Madison reeling. Most medical research is funded by the National Institutes for Health. The new policy would limit Niaid's funding for indirect costs to 15%, far below the 55.5% overhead costs at Madison. The cut is currently blocked by a federal court. UW School of Medicine and Public Health Dean Robert Golden is here to describe the implications. Dr.. Thanks very much for being here.

[00:01:30] **Speaker 2** It's a pleasure.

[00:01:31] **Speaker 1** So what would the loss of $65 million, which is what I understand it is a year by way of cuts to these indirect costs mean to research.

[00:01:41] **Speaker 2** Madison This would be devastating. This would be apocalyptic. This would mean that we would have to dramatically scale back and probably end really important research going from the bench to the bedside into the community in areas like cancer, diabetes, heart disease and neurologic illnesses.

[00:02:03] **Speaker 1** So you're you list those costs again as being 55.5% of research expenditures. What what does that go toward?

[00:02:12] **Speaker 2** Well, here's one way to think about it. It's Valentine's Day and I'm going to cook dinner foreshadowed to to celebrate when I go out and buy the groceries, the eggs and the cheese for a quiche. Those are direct costs. But I need to have a refrigerator to keep them safe. I need to be paying my electric bills in order to have the cookware work. And so the indirect costs are literally freezers that literally keep things safe for both clinical as well as pre-clinical research. And they are essential. Otherwise the food goes bad and you can't prepare dinner.

[00:02:51] **Speaker 1** So is it possible to reduce those costs to 15%? And if forced, what goes?

[00:02:58] **Speaker 2** Well, the infrastructure goes. Our equipment becomes old and not replaced. New buildings are not built. Renovations for both equipment and the actual buildings are not there. The staff who are required to fill out all the forms from the federal government, ensuring that our people in the labs are safe cannot be kept on. So it would be absolutely devastating.

[00:03:24] **Speaker 1** And yet it's being made out as bloated administrative expenditures to pad the books on the backs of taxpayers. What's your response to that?

[00:03:34] **Speaker 2** Anybody who has been in academics, anybody who's been in research would never use the word bloated, shoestring, living on the edge. Funding already is so competitive and so low that every day every investigators looking for more efficient ways for her to keep her research going.

[00:03:52] **Speaker 1** What research is happening right now that would be hurt?

[00:03:56] **Speaker 2** We have important clinical trials in cancer, for example, for patients who have failed to respond to conventional treatments. These are important not simply for the science, but for those individual patients. We have new promising treatments that have gone from basic discoveries into practice looking at potential new therapies for blinding illness. We have a lot of research that really focuses in on asthma and childhood asthma, in particular nationally renowned research. All of this, including the laboratory basic science that leads to new therapeutics, as well as the clinical trials looking for safety and effectiveness would be at serious risk.

[00:04:39] **Speaker 1** What are some of the kind of famous breakthroughs found through research at UW Madison?

[00:04:44] **Speaker 2** Well, in fact, one of the very first medications for cancer treatment for Flora Uracil was discovered right here. We have also had amazing technological breakthroughs with Tomo therapy, a sophisticated way of doing imaging that not only has helped countless patients worldwide, but has led to spinoff companies that built up our economy. There are so many exciting new breakthroughs going on, but they build on a tradition that has been present here ever since the founding of the NIH.

[00:05:18] **Speaker 1** So the cuts are currently blocked, as we mentioned. What measure of solace is that?

[00:05:24] **Speaker 2** Well, it's just a temporary reprieve. We do hope you have to be hopeful in order to be in academics in our days. That patient voices, voices of reason will lead to a more than temporary restraint. It's not to say that our system is perfect. It's one of the best in the world. But there might be. Ways to continue what's already happening, to look for the most efficient ways that we can continue to invest in research so that we're investing in the health of people in populations.

[00:06:02] **Speaker 1** All right. Dr. Robert Gold, thanks very much.

[00:06:04] **Speaker 2** Thank you. I think they must have realized that what they were doing was illegal as well as unwise. But this is just one of a series of things. But this one would be really, really deadly for universities like ours.

[00:06:35] **Speaker 1** Yeah. And then, you know, they're talking about universities like Harvard or something. But are they? They're huge endowments. That's what they always point to. I mean, UW has its own but not you can't compare.

[00:06:51] **Speaker 2** Yeah, but those huge endowments are wisely being invested in stuff. Yeah. Okay. It isn't as though they're just sitting there. And if you go to the Harvard campus, they have the advantage of doing all the investments beyond what we are able to afford to do in cyber security. Something you're familiar with. But, you know, right now, it takes a lot of running just to stay in the same place in terms of the safety of patient data. There is brilliant hackers out there in terms of the safety for the, you know, radioactive compounds that we're developing for a third Gnostic for cancer treatment. And so you can't say, that's just fluff. It's the kind of things ranging from effective hoods to protect the gases that you're working with. You can't say the research can go on without the indirect because the indirect make it safe to do the research. And Harvard, you know, I wish I had their IT structure. We have pretty damn good I.T. here, but it's nowhere near the computing capacity that they have. So they're not just sitting around counting their dollars or putting it in there. And, you know, it's kind of like saying, well, you know, so our teachers are getting a pay cut, but they get paid more than the folks that clean the schoolhouses. Yeah, but teachers still can't afford to get a pay cut. They have to deal with inflation and the inflation, especially in pharmaceuticals, that we need for research and other biomaterials. It's costly.

[00:08:34] **Speaker 1** Well, we will follow this.

[00:08:36] **Speaker 2** And thank you.

[00:08:37] **Speaker 1** Would like to have you back when there's some understanding of what's going on. Yeah.