

Subject: [EXT] Public comments

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From: Anusha Kalbasi

To: Lana Morales

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To whom it may concern:

Please find below my public comments for the January 29, 2026 CIRM Board Meeting

Good afternoon. My name is Dr. Anusha Kalbasi. I am a California physician-scientist at Stanford, and I lead a CIRM-supported, first-of-its-kind pan-California Phase 1 cell therapy trial for patients with rare cancers.

Because of CIRM's vision, we built a tri-institutional clinical network across Stanford, UCLA, and City of Hope with distributive manufacturing to reach patients statewide and accelerate early-phase trials for rare cancers. This was not meant to be just a single study—it was an intentional investment in infrastructure, collaboration, and access for California patients.

We are now seeing that investment pay off, with successful activation at secondary sites and enrollment of our first patients across the state. And yet, under the current preference-based triage system, this very project—already funded, already treating patients—would never have been considered for scientific review.

That is the unintended consequence I want to emphasize. The new system does not merely prioritize certain approaches; it mathematically excludes others before science is evaluated. In doing so, it risks destabilizing the academic cell-therapy ecosystem that CIRM itself helped build.

For patients with rare, lethal cancers, these are not abstract policy choices. They determine whether trials exist at all. I respectfully ask the Board to ensure that this framework does not block scientifically rigorous, patient-ready cell and gene therapies for cancer—or undermine the visionary investments CIRM has already made on behalf of Californians.

Thank you.