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Could NIH See a New Leader Soon? HELP Chair To Hold Hearing for NCI's Bertagnolli This Month

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Although the date has not yet been made public, this month, NIH director nominee Monica Bertagnolli, M.D., is predicted to have a hearing before the Senate Health, Education, Labor and Pensions (HELP) Committee—now that conditions imposed by two powerful senators have been satisfied. She would have to win committee approval and then the okay of the full Senate before becoming the permanent director.

NIH has been led by Acting Director Larry Tabak since Francis Collins stepped down as the agency's longest-serving director in December 2021 to focus on running the molecular genetics section of the National Human Genome Research Institute. Bertagnolli's nomination has not been languishing that long—President Biden nominated her in May.

A relative newcomer to NIH, Bertagnolli has been serving as director of the National Cancer Institute (NCI) since October.

HELP Chair Sen. Bernie Sanders, I-Vt., had refused to hold a hearing on Bertagnolli, saying the White House needed to do more to lower the price of pharmaceutical drugs—something over which NIH has little control.

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