

Coronavirus: US states urge end to ban on fetal research

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Xavier Becerra described the race to develop a vaccine as a top priority

A coalition of US states has urged President Donald Trump to lift a ban on fetal tissue research in a bid to help scientists developing vaccines for the new coronavirus.

"As we work together to combat the unprecedented threat of the COVID-19 pandemic, developing a vaccine and therapeutic treatments for the virus has to be a top priority," said Xavier Becerra, the [attorney general](#) for California, which is leading the push.

"In order to achieve this important goal, we need to make sure that scientists and [medical professionals](#) have access to the research and resources necessary to protect the population and safeguard the most vulnerable among us, including [pregnant women](#) and children."

Becerra, who was joined by attorneys general from 14 other states including Wisconsin, Minnesota, Nevada and Hawaii, said scientists at the National Institute of Health who are working on therapies for

COVID-19 had been hampered by the ban, imposed last June.

"A better understanding of COVID-19 is critical to stopping the spread," said Hawaii's Attorney General Clare Connors.

"With the states doing everything they can to flatten the curve, the federal administration needs to do everything it can so that scientists and medical professionals are able to find solutions."

Research using fetal tissue has led to the development of vaccines for polio, rubella and measles, the attorneys general pointed out in their appeal.

According to the American Medical Association, "fetal tissue has also been used to study the mechanism of viral infections and to diagnose viral infections and inherited diseases, as well as to develop transplant therapies."

In imposing the research ban supported by anti-abortion activists, Trump argued that his aim was to protect the "dignity of life."

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