

\$1 billion for labs to fight bioterrorism

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The U.S. government plans to spend at least \$1 billion on new facilities to fight bioterrorism over the next decade.

The government plans to build seven large new buildings housing laboratories for research designated "biosafety level-4," reserved for life-threatening diseases with no known cure, reported the Wall Street Journal Wednesday.

Labs that work on infectious micro-organisms range in levels of biosafety from one to four, and the BSL-4 labs are high-security facilities that research the most infectious diseases, such as the Ebola virus and other viral hemorrhagic fevers.

Research on BSL-4 agents has been limited to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention in Atlanta and the U.S. Army Medical Research Institute of Infectious Diseases at Fort Detrick in Frederick, Md. But with the threat of bioterrorism and emerging infectious diseases, these facilities aren't adequate for the growing demand for research into BSL-4 agents, scientists say.

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