



# A Transforming Vision for Clinical and Translational Research

As part of the NIH Roadmap for Re-engineering the Clinical Research Enterprise, NIH recently launched an initiative that is designed to revolutionize the way that clinical and translational research is conducted at academic health centers (AHCs) across the country. The goal of the initiative is to advance the academic standing of clinical and translational science as a distinct discipline, and to catalyze the development of an academic home for clinical and translational science. NCCR has been asked to implement this new and very exciting approach in coordination with the other NIH institutes and centers.

As many of you know from your own experiences, clinical and translational research involves specialized knowledge above that required for a medical, dental, or nursing degree, or specialty certification, and is a distinct discipline with a knowledge and skill base that must be learned. The increasing complexity of clinical and translational research requires a professional team that may include basic scientists, skilled clinical scientists, technology experts, and highly trained nurses, coordinators, and ancillary personnel. However, setting up these teams can be daunting for junior investigators and difficult even for more senior investigators unless the institution provides a conducive environment.

Dr. Zerhouni's vision under this initiative is to create a new home for clinical and translational research science that includes degree granting programs and opportunities for creative mentoring of the next generation of clinical and translational scientists. In supporting a range of academic, intellectual, and service activities, the new initiative will provide the financial resources and flexibility for institutions to establish an academic home that will likely encompass the following:

- Well-designed clinical studies and trials that include enhanced protocol development and regulatory oversight;
- Education, training, and career development, with an option of a clinical and translational science degree-granting program;
- Clinical research informatics and data management support with attention to leveraging efforts in healthcare informatics and facilitating inter-institutional collaborations;
- Clinical research resources, including space and personnel for inpatient, outpatient, and community studies and patient recruitment services;
- Core technologies and laboratories that provide clinical research services to investigators; and
- Pilot studies program for trainees, new investigators, and new innovative projects that need preliminary data before garnering independent support.

You will be hearing more about this new initiative when NCCR announces funding opportunities in the late summer or early fall. While NIH will make investments in this initiative, it also will require the support of the AHCs, industry, and foundations. As with all matters related to biomedical research, collaboration will be essential as we work toward our ultimate goal of finding ways to prevent, pre-empt, detect, treat, and cure more diseases.

**Barbara Alving, M.D.**

*Acting Director, NCCR*

(For more information on this initiative, see "News from NCCR," page 15.)

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**NCCR Reporter**



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**On the Cover:** Studying gene expression in rhesus macaques opens a window into the genetic mechanisms underlying human health and disease. With two NCCR-funded projects now developing gene expression microarrays for these monkeys, rhesus genes can finally reveal their secrets.

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