

NIH is Committed to Providing a Pathway to

Research  
Independence  
for New  
Investigators

# Pathway to Independence Award

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## K99/R00

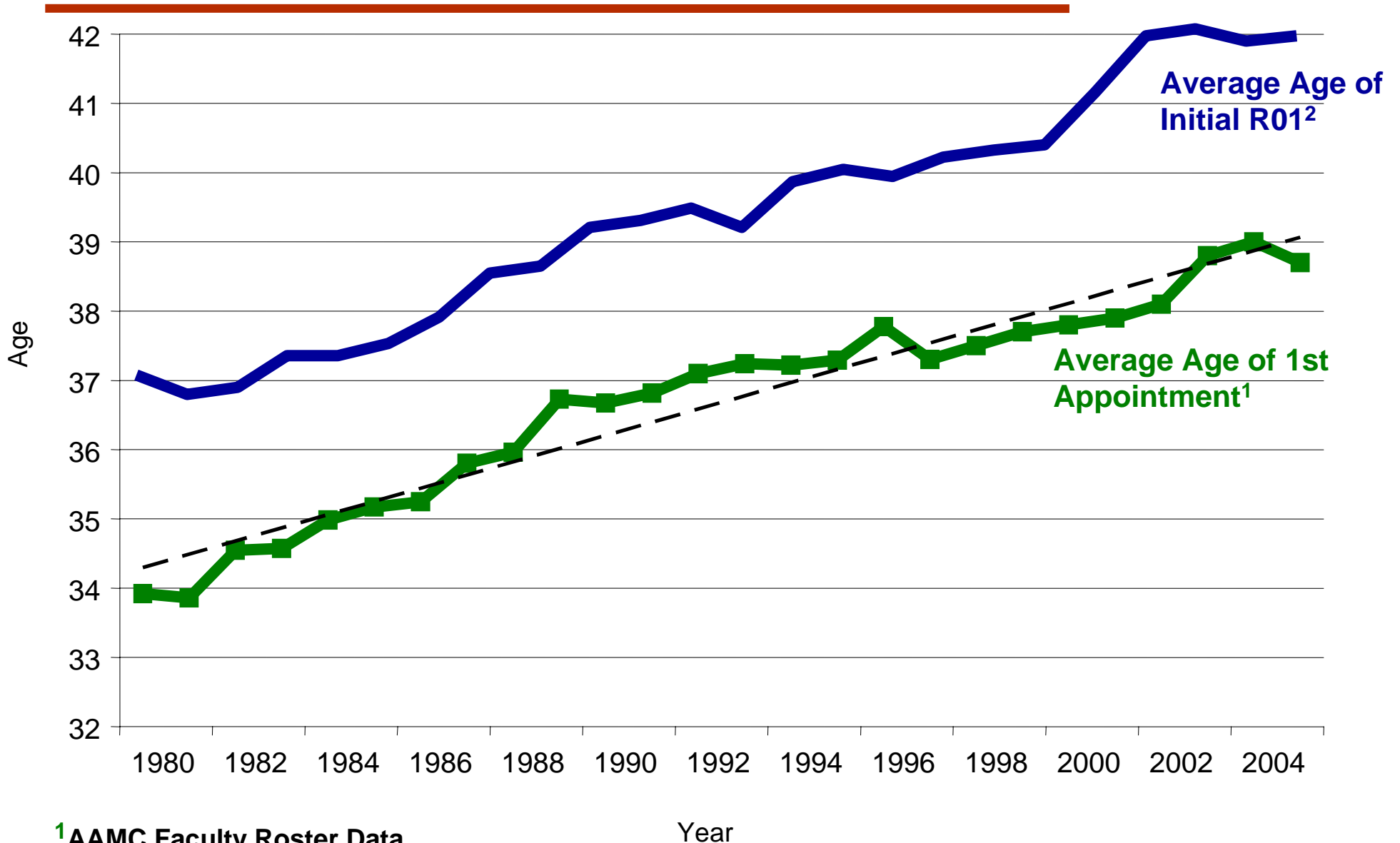
National Institutes of Health

February 12, 2008

# Today's Discussion

- History behind development of the K99/R00
- General description of award program
- Intramural-specific details
- Answers about submission, review and awarding of grants

# Increasing Average Age of Research Independence



<sup>1</sup>AAMC Faculty Roster Data

<sup>2</sup>[http://grants1.nih.gov/grants/new\\_investigators/resources.htm](http://grants1.nih.gov/grants/new_investigators/resources.htm)

# NIH New Investigators Committee

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- Established May 2005
- To develop a list of action items that have the potential to increase and maintain a healthy cohort of new and talented, NIH-supported, independent investigators
- To facilitate an investigator's ability to receive their first R01 award earlier in their research career

# Pathway to Independence Award Features

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## Initial Award Features

- Utilizes a K99/R00 mechanism
- Five years of support consisting of two phases
- Phase I provides 1-2 years of mentored support for advanced fellows
  - Total cost of \$90,000 per award including 8% F&A
- Phase II provides up to 3 years of independent research support contingent upon securing an independent research position and administrative review.
  - Total cost of \$249,000 per award including full F&A
- Award is portable – it moves with scientist to faculty appointment

# Eligibility Requirements

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- Applicants must be in a mentored or postdoctoral position that meet the eligibility criteria, regardless of the title of their current position
- Applicants must have no more than 5 years of postdoctoral research training at the time of initial application, **or subsequent resubmission**
- Time spent conducting postgraduate clinical training that does not involve research is not considered as part of the 5-year research training eligibility limit
- Both U.S. and non-U.S. citizens are eligible to apply
- Both the K and R portion of the award have to be conducted at U.S. institutions
- An applicant who has significantly changed research directions, resulting in greater than 5 years of research experience, may be eligible for an exception. Should consult with appropriate NIH program staff.

# Pathway to Independence Award Reissued PA-07-297 January 12, 2007

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## ➤ Notable Changes

- Eligibility clarified – mainly relates to clinicians who are independent in clinical duties, but not research duties
- Award information – increases salary limits from \$50K to Institute guidelines typical of other K awards
- Retains minimum \$20K for research costs in K portion, but some ICs offer higher levels
- Clarifies application, review, and award procedures for K99 phase
- Clarifies policies and procedures for R00 phase

# Pathway to Independence Eligibility Clarifications

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- Eligibility to Apply for the K99 Phase Award
  - You must be a “postdoc” – this turns out to be difficult to define
- Clinicians in positions not designated as postdoctoral positions
  - Clinicians often obtain a clinical faculty position denoting independence in clinical responsibilities but not in research.
  - A clinical faculty member who does not hold an independent research faculty position may be eligible for the K99/R00 award, and should contact a Program Director at the relevant NIH Institute for guidance
- Eligibility to Activate the R00 Phase Award
  - You must have a tenure track assistant professor position or the equivalent!
- We will know it when we see it?
  - Titles are not helpful – especially for clinicians
  - **Operational definitions to be used** instead include: independent funding; control of space; ability to accept students, hire postdocs; having a vote at faculty meetings; relationship to mentor; institutional policies and privileges



# NIH Intramural-specific Information

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- For the NIH intramural program, postdoctoral fellows include IRTAs, CRTAs, Visiting Fellows, Research or Clinical Fellows, and special volunteers with their own fellowship funding
- Staff scientists, staff clinicians, or others in non-fellowship positions are not eligible
- Contract workers are not eligible to apply through the NIH intramural program because they are not supervised by an NIH PI

# NIH Intramural-specific Information

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## ➤ **Some rules and math:**

- An awardee must spend at least one year in the K99 portion of the award.
- Applications, and resubmissions, must occur before a maximum of 5 years of postdoctoral training has occurred.
- IRTA, CRTA and VF positions are all maximally 5 years long.
- Therefore, in general, only intramural fellows with 4 or less years of postdoctoral training may submit applications.
- In exceptional cases, with the Scientific Director's approval, a fellow with 4-5 years of postdoctoral experience can apply, provided a Research Fellow position is available to extend the fellow.

# NIH Intramural-specific Information

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- Research or Clinical Fellows with less than 4 years postdoctoral training are eligible to apply.
- For VFs on J-1 visas, the NIH will support an extension of the J-1 to cover the remaining time, within the J-1 visa restrictions. When the fellow moves to an institution to start the R00 portion, the NIH will not object to the waiver for the H-1b visa.

# Further NIH Intramural-specific Information

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- For NIH intramural fellows, Phase 1 funding will come from their current IC, although the R00 phase may be funded by a different IC.
- The postdoctoral supervisor will write the Statement by Sponsor and is expected to review the complete application with the postdoc. This Statement is not an endorsement/recommendation for the fellow but rather the information requested about the candidate's research career and the sponsor.
- The Scientific Director or Lab/Branch Chief will provide the Environment and Commitment statement (sample available).
- The Scientific Director will sign the cover sheet as the Institutional Signing Official and must have approved the application.

# Further NIH Intramural-specific Information

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- Candidates should include in their research plan:
  - 1) A description of the mentor's research, describing how it relates to his/her proposed research plan
  - 2) Details of potential overlap and synergism
  - 3) A description of how the mentoring plan described in the application will help the fellow's career development in the K99 phase over and above the current NIH postdoctoral experience
- The postdoctoral fellow will continue to work on the mentor's research while starting to carve out an independent project to be used in the R00 phase.
- Joint collaborative projects can continue to be published with both the postdoctoral fellow and mentor as authors.

# Further NIH Intramural-specific Information

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- Preliminary data can always be added when the SRA requests supplementary information 2-4 weeks prior to the study section meeting.
- At least one publication relevant to the proposal is helpful.
- It is useful for intramural fellows to identify an outside “bridging” mentor familiar with the academic world and describe in specific terms how that mentor will contribute to training, identification of an academic position, and the R00 independent phase.

## Further NIH Intramural-specific Information

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- Once someone has received an award, a delay in moving to the R00 portion is allowed only under extenuating circumstances, to be decided on a case-by-case basis.
- If a fellow wins an award and accepts a tenure-track position at the NIH, the R00 portion of the award will have to be relinquished as it cannot be used in the intramural program.
- One cannot submit more than one K award application simultaneously, or submit one while another is pending.

# Further NIH Intramural-specific Information

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- Intramural Training Directors can be contacted for information on grant-writing workshops
- Program staff in the ICs' extramural programs are available for advice – their names and contact information can be found at: [http://grants.nih.gov/grants/guide/contacts/pa-06-133\\_contacts.htm](http://grants.nih.gov/grants/guide/contacts/pa-06-133_contacts.htm)
- Speaker information

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