



*Winter 2009*

## Greetings for 2009—



NIH is extremely active at the start of the new year. I have been ably aided by Dr. Larry Tabak as Acting Deputy Director in meeting with the Presidential Transition Team, working to express NIH's strengths and needs. We have been grateful to the many organizations who have contributed to the ongoing dialogue about the future of science and health in the nation and the importance of sustaining research.

In November, as one of my first duties as Acting NIH Director, I testified before the Subcommittee on Health of the U.S. House Committee on Energy and Commerce on "The Role of Biomedical Research in the Economic Stimulus" ([http://olpa.od.nih.gov/hearings/110/session2/testimonies/biomedical\\_research.asp](http://olpa.od.nih.gov/hearings/110/session2/testimonies/biomedical_research.asp)). We estimate that NIH provides 300,000 jobs in the U.S., approximately 7 positions for each grant. To determine the long-term effect of NIH-supported research, we reviewed the outcome of 31,144 grants awarded in FY 2000. The outcomes included 30,477 invention disclosures, 17,341 non-provisional patent applications, and 6,909

patents. The stimulus to science is a clear way to maintain the momentum of discovery while supporting personnel and infrastructural resources nationwide.

In other activities from NIH, on January 15, we were able to post the results of several years of work on Research, Condition, and Disease Categorization (RCDC) to allow the public and Congress to better understand how our dollars are spent in 215 categories. By clicking on each of the categories, identified by Congress over time, the user will be able to access full project listings for that category and view, print, or download the detailed report. RCDC is a process that was initiated at the request of Congress to provide consistent and transparent NIH research funding information. The process uses sophisticated text data mining (categorizing and clustering using words and multi-word phrases) in conjunction with the NIH-wide definitions used to match projects to categories. Thousands of hours of top-level scientific discussions went into the development of definitions that would be truly trans-institute and give the best reflection, through a consistent process, of funding levels. The RCDC process will not change the way NIH makes awards throughout the year for medical research, nor the way researchers apply for grants.

I wanted to be sure you knew that NIH's first Biennial Report of the Director has been released. It is a document that provides an integrated portrait of NIH research activities. The report makes it easier for Congress, advocates and patient groups, and the general public to understand the many programs within the agency.

The report contains an assessment of the state of biomedical and behavioral research organized by disease category, investigative approach, or resource. To ensure that the document reflects the work of all 27 Institutes and Centers (ICs), 15 trans-NIH teams gathered, reviewed, and organized information into a standardized format. To best serve the public and the scientific and legislative communities, sections of the report include:

- An introduction to the disease, disorder, field, or approach;
- A summary of the scope of NIH's research activities referencing the ICs whose missions address the topic;
- Related health statistics;
- Aggregate data on NIH funding;
- Notable examples of research activities, key programs, initiatives, studies and accomplishments; and
- Strategic plans.

As mandated by Congress, the report includes chapters on the following diseases, disorders, health topics, and

NIH activities:

- Cancer;
- Neuroscience and disorders of the nervous system;
- Infectious diseases and biodefense;
- Autoimmune diseases;
- Chronic diseases and organ systems;
- Life stages, human development, and rehabilitation;
- Minority health and health disparities;
- Epidemiological and longitudinal studies;
- Genomics;
- Molecular biology and basic sciences;
- Clinical and translational research;
- Disease registries, databases, and biomedical information systems;
- Technology development;
- Research training and career development;
- Health communication, information campaigns, and clearinghouses; and
- Six Congressionally-mandated NIH Center of Excellence programs.

The NIH Reform Act of 2006 (Pub. L. 109-482) affirmed the importance of NIH and its vital role in advancing biomedical research to improve the health of the nation. The legislation established new strategies to accomplish NIH's mission in an era when the scale and complexity of health issues require constant innovation and interdisciplinary efforts. To that end, the NIH Reform Act replaced many of the disparate reports required by law from NIH's ICs with one comprehensive biennial account to Congress. The NIH Biennial Report for Fiscal Years 2006 & 2007 is the agency's first under the new mandate.

We feel this report will be helpful to you in whatever way you relate to the work of the agency. The report is available through the Research Portfolio Online Reporting Tool (RePORT) Web site at <http://biennialreport.nih.gov>. The print version of the report will be released this month. Thumb drives loaded with PDFs of the print and Web versions of the report also will be available. This public release follows the submission of an administrative pre-print of the report to Congress last June.

I look forward to your comments and suggestions and am grateful for all the support and advice I am receiving as the NIH's Acting Director.

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I invite you to share any comments you have with me, directly, at [NIHKingtondirect@nih.gov](mailto:NIHKingtondirect@nih.gov).

*Raynard S. Kington, M.D., Ph.D., Acting Director, National Institutes of Health*

For information about NIH programs, useful health information, and additional resources, see the NIH Web site at [www.nih.gov](http://www.nih.gov). An archive of the Director's Newsletter is available at <http://www.nih.gov/about/director/newsletter/archive.htm>.



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