



NIH Scientific Management Review Board



Substance Use, Abuse, and Addiction Research Working Group

William Roper, MD, MPH
Dean of the School of Medicine and
Vice Chancellor of Medical Affairs,
University of North Carolina;
CEO of the UNC Health Care System

Overview

- **Membership**
- **Context for Deliberations**
- **Working Group Charge**
- **Briefings (Past and Future)**
- **Summary of Public Views**
- **Questions for Further Investigation**
- **Additional Considerations**
- **Future Activities**

Membership

Non-Federal

William Roper, MD, MPH
(Chair)

Deborah Powell, MD

Eugene Washington, MD

Huda Zoghbi, MD

Norman Augustine
(ad hoc)

Federal

Josephine Briggs, MD

Richard Hodes, MD

Griffin Rodgers, MD

Lawrence Tabak, DDS, PhD

Francis Collins, MD, PhD
(ex officio)

Context for Deliberations

**Why consider this particular
organizational change at this
particular time?**

Context for Deliberations *(cont...)*

- **Neuroscience research has revealed that addictive substances, including drugs and alcohol:**
 - Differentially affect brain receptors and can result in unique neuropathologies
 - Similarly activate certain physiological pathways including the brain's reward circuit, which can result in compulsive substance use
- **Considering both biological differences and similarities, does the current organization separating research institutes on drug and alcohol use, abuse, and addiction provide optimal infrastructure for supporting these areas of scientific research?**

Context for Deliberations *(cont...)*

- **Social-Political:**
 - The NIH Reform Act established the SMRB to advise NIH on the use of organizational authorities
 - In 2003, the National Academies recommended considering merging NIAAA and NIDA (option of a combined institute of addiction also identified by the Lewin Group in 1988)
 - The Drug Abuse Education, Prevention, and Treatment Act of 2001 (S.304) required the DHHS Secretary to request an IOM study to determine whether combining NIDA and NIAAA would strengthen scientific research efforts and increase economic efficiency (*study has yet to be conducted*)

Charge

The Substance Use, Abuse, and Addiction (SUAA) workgroup of the SMRB is convened to recommend whether organizational change within NIH could further optimize research into substance use, abuse, and addiction and maximize human health and/or patient well being.

Charge *(cont...)*

The Working Group will consider:

- **Scientific opportunities, public health needs, and new research technologies**
- **Research in these areas under existing NIH structure**
- **Criteria for contemplating changes in the organization and management of NIH today**
- **Strategies for implementing changes in the organization and management of NIH today**
- **Metrics and methodologies that could be used for evaluating the impact of changes in the organization and management of NIH today.**

Briefings: Past

- **SUAA Research at the NIH** - perspectives from NIAAA and NIDA Directors
- **Public Health Needs in SUAA Research** - perspectives from prevention specialists, treatment providers, patient advocates, and policy specialists
- **Science of SUAA** - perspectives from scientists on the mechanisms, pathology, and treatment
- **Alternative Models for Organizing SUAA Research** - perspectives from academia, industry, and the judicial system

Briefings: Future

- **Alternative Models, Past Decisions, and Future Considerations for the Organization of SUAA Research at NIH** - lessons learned from Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration; Alcohol, Drug Abuse, and Mental Health Administration; and the Office of National Drug Control Policy
- **Perspectives from Former Institute Directors**

Advocates FOR Reorganization

- **Science would benefit from synergy of commonalities:**
 - Emerging scientific research indicate similar reward pathways underlie compulsive behavior
 - Alcohol and drug abuse often begins in adolescence with similar early risk factors
- **High prevalence of drug users also use alcohol, suggesting both scientific and policy justification**
- **Segregation of disciplines create public health gaps**

Advocates FOR Reorganization *(cont...)*

- **Reorganization, particularly merging, would:**
 - **Create synergy for advancing the science of substance use, abuse and addiction**
 - **Increase flexibility in cross-training**

Advocates AGAINST Reorganization

- **Reorganization would create research gaps in understanding:**
 - **Multiple organ targets of alcohol**
 - **Unique factors underlying abuse and addiction**
- **Contextual and socio-cultural differences warrant separate, focused research efforts**
- **Lack of compelling evidence to suggest reorganization would improve treatment, prevention, research, and/or training**
- **Current organization mirrors the separation of professional and scientific associations**

Advocates **AGAINST** Reorganization *(cont...)*

- **Reorganization, particularly merging, would:**
 - **Decrease emphasis on effects of alcohol on multiple organ targets**
 - **Jeopardize priority/budget of alcohol-related research**
 - **Create organizational/administrative obstacles and reversals**

Questions for Further Investigation

- **How is the science being (or not being) served by the current organization?**
 - Are any areas of science neglected?
 - Are gaps in public health created (e.g., poly-substance abusers)?
 - Are there sufficiently common biological pathways warranting a more integrated scientific approach?

Questions for Further Investigation *(cont...)*

- **What research is (or is not) already being conducted by NIH in the field of addiction?**
 - **What is the scientific and funding portfolio of addiction-related research across ICs?**
 - **% of total budget?**
 - **Are there existing collaborations across ICs?**
 - **Examples from the intramural program?**
 - **Examples from the extramural program?**

Questions for Further Investigation *(cont...)*

- **How do other countries/organizations optimize the organization of SUAA research?**
 - **What are the alcohol-related research priorities in other countries?**
 - **How do international research agencies organize around alcohol and drug abuse?**

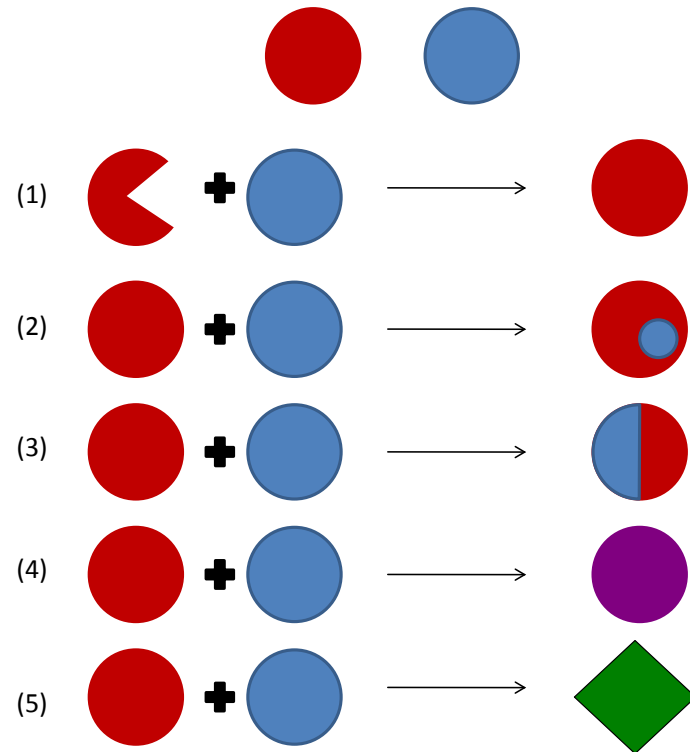
Additional Considerations

- Initial dialogue focused on either the “status quo” or “merging” Institutes



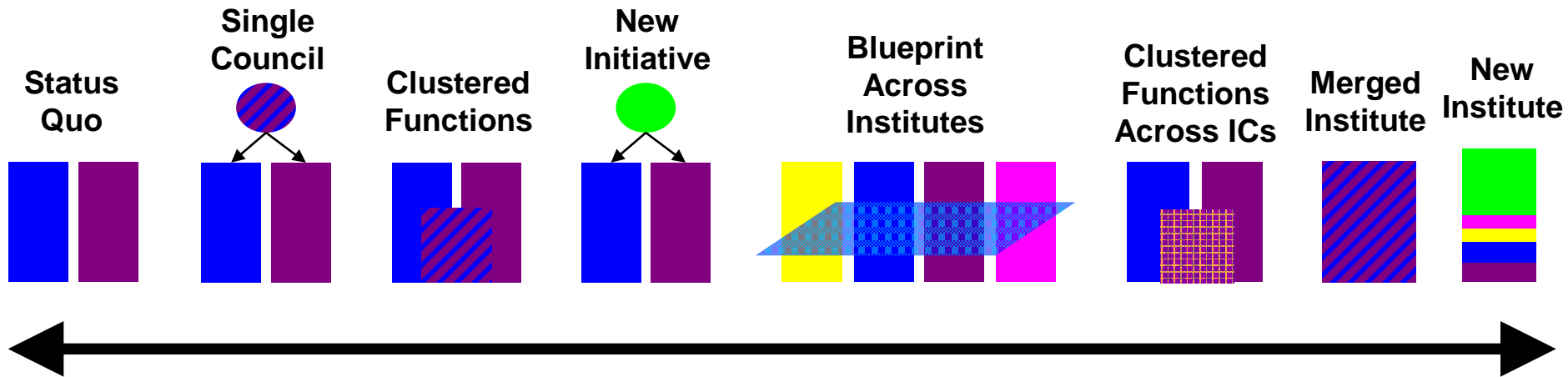
Additional Considerations *(cont...)*

- However, it is important to consider that mergers can take multiple forms and have multiple options



Full Spectrum of Options

- Each option needs to be carefully considered to maximize functional integration



Future Activities and Next Steps

- **Additional briefings**
- **Collect data to answer questions for further investigation**
- **Evaluate full spectrum of organization models**
- **Brief relevant IC Councils**

DISCUSSION
