



**NAEVR**

National Alliance For  
Eye And Vision Research

*Serving as Friends of the National Eye Institute*

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**Public Statement Regarding Creation of a New Translational Research Center  
NAEVR Executive Director James Jorkasky  
Scientific Management Review Board (SMRB) Meeting  
Translational Medicine and Therapeutics (TMAT) Working Group  
December 7, 2010**

Thank you, Chairman Augustine. I am James Jorkasky, Executive Director of the National Alliance for Eye and Vision Research, or NAEVR, which serves as the privately funded “Friends of the National Eye Institute (NEI).” NAEVR is a research advocacy organization that does not speak for NEI, but about its accomplishments. I want to speak briefly about retaining Institute/Center (I/C) flexibility in translational approaches.

In September, I testified before you about NEI’s collaborations within the NIH, across the Department of Health and Human Services (DHHS), with other government agencies, with private funding organizations, and internationally in translational research. The NEI has been recognized by Dr. Collins for its leadership in this regard.

Although the NEI is a relatively small Institute, it has conducted numerous translational collaborations that have smartly and effectively expanded its research dollars. NEI’s translational research has resulted in drugs and devices— and combinations thereof—as well as diagnostics and gene therapy approaches, reflecting the promise of translational research to offer a “rich repertoire of patient solutions.”

In summary, as the SMRB/TMAT proceeds in deliberations and in offering a recommendation, and as the NIH studies the implications of a new Translational Research Center for the I/Cs, all should adhere to one of the characteristics that the TMAT has described for such a Center –that it promotes and allows flexibility in decision-making and priority-setting. Although centralized decision-making could provide additional opportunities and economies of scale, especially for mid-to-small-sized I/Cs, it should not stifle their creativity in pursuing innovative translational research approaches.

Thank you for this opportunity for NAEVR to once again provide its input.