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March 26, 2010

William L. Roper, MD, MPH
Substance Use, Abuse, and Addiction Workgroup, Chairman
Scientific Management Review Board, OD, NIH
Building 1, Room 103
9000 Rockville Pike
Bethesda, MD 20892

Dear Dr. Roper:

On behalf of the over 1,700 scientists, associates, and researchers represented by the Research Society on Alcoholism (RSA), we have frequently expressed our objections to a proposed merger between the National Institute on Alcohol Abuse and Alcoholism (NIAAA) and National Institute on Drug Abuse (NIDA). RSA deeply appreciates the interest and attentiveness which you have paid to our concerns.

RSA has monitored SUAA's deliberations closely and it occurred to us that the views of the scientists and researchers who are "on the ground" conducting critical research may not have been fully aired.

To address this issue, RSA recently conducted a poll of its members over a two-day period in order to gauge the sentiment of its members about the potential merger. The survey asked whether the respondents agreed with or opposed the following resolution:

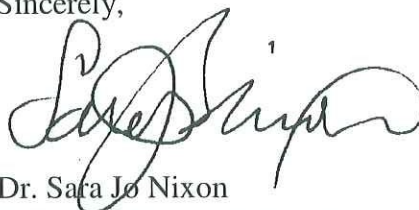
"RSA strongly opposes any structural reorganization at NIH that results in the elimination of NIAAA as an independent Institute dedicated to all aspects of alcohol research. Moreover, RSA strongly supports the study of a functional reorganization of basic and clinical research across NIH Institutes to better address commonalities in alcoholism, substance abuse, obesity, gambling, and their co-morbid mental health disorders."

The results showed overwhelming opposition to the elimination of NIAAA as an independent Institute—597 respondents supported the proposition while only 18 opposed it, a 97 percent majority. This same majority, however, also endorsed a study of a functional reorganization of basic and clinical research across NIH Institutes.

We appreciate your diligent work to fully deliberate and review all aspects and potential outcomes of this important matter.

RSA stands ready to assist you and the SUAA Working Group as you work through the remainder of this process.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Sara Jo Nixon'. The signature is fluid and cursive, with a small number '1' written above the final part of the name.

Dr. Sara Jo Nixon
President, Research Society on Alcoholism