

AMERICAN ASSOCIATION FOR
THE STUDY OF LIVER DISEASES



May 24, 2010

Mr. Norman Augustine, Chairman
Scientific Management Review Board, OD, NIH
Building 1, Room 103
9000 Rockville Pike
Bethesda, MD 20892

Dear Chairman Augustine:

I would like to thank you for the opportunity to testify on May 18 at the Scientific Management Review Board meeting in Bethesda, MD. I have great respect for the work that the SMRB has been doing for the past year under your leadership and look forward to your continued efforts to assure that NIH functions in a manner that maximizes benefits to the American people.

As you move toward resolution of the SUAA-related issues before the Board, I would ask that you keep in mind a couple of key points I made in my testimony:

- A significant portion of the NIAAA portfolio, including research into alcohol-related liver disease, is not addiction-centric and will be orphaned by a structural merger.
- No less than 30,000 Americans die every year from alcohol-related liver disease.
- Many key scientific concepts, with applicability beyond alcohol, have resulted from NIAAA-funded research.

The functional reorganization that has been discussed extensively in the meeting and in previous meetings clearly protects those areas of research that are not addiction-related while assuring that there is maximum coordination among the minority portion of the research portfolio that is addiction-related.

As this process moves toward its conclusion, we respectfully request your support for proceeding with a functional merger of the appropriate elements to maximize the efficiencies between the institutes while retaining those elements such as alcohol-related liver research in their current, highly successful format.

Thank you for your consideration of our position and for your service in this important undertaking.

Sincerely,

Dr. Arun Sanyal
AASLD President

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