

December 3, 2010

Scientific Management Review Board  
ATTN: Lyric Jorgenson  
Office of Science Policy, Office of the Director  
National Institutes of Health  
6705 Rockledge Drive, Suite 750  
Bethesda, MD 20892

Dear Scientific Management Review Board:

As organizations dedicated to improving the health and well-being of children by furthering pediatric medical research, we write to offer comments to the National Institutes of Health (NIH) and its Scientific Management Review Board (SMRB) on recommendations for integrating translational research at NIH. On November 10, 2010, the Translational Medicine and Therapeutics (TMAT) Working Group of the SMRB outlined its proposal for a new institute or center (IC) be formed to promote translational research across the NIH. The full board intends to vote on specific working group recommendations on December 7, 2010. We applaud the NIH for its dedication to furthering the translation of basic scientific advances into meaningful therapeutics for patients, and we urge the board seriously consider the needs of children and families as it deliberates recommendations for reorganization.

Investments in the health of children are among the most valuable uses of public funds because they produce life-long benefits of increased well-being and productivity. Biomedical and behavioral research is the origin of the pediatric medical advances that deserve our support, and translational research is an essential piece of the process that brings these scientific developments into medical practice. This translation is especially important for children who are frequently left without the scope and quality of therapies that are available to adults. Effective translational research for children, however, would not be possible without infrastructure that recognizes the unique nature of children and supports pediatric efforts from basic science through phase 4 translational research.

The Eunice Kennedy Shriver National Institute of Child Health and Human Development (NICHD) has been a critical partner in the effort to expand knowledge about disease that affects children and to develop medical advances to improve child health. Along with NICHD, the Clinical and Translational Science Awards (CTSA) Consortium has helped further child health by advancing clinical and translational research through investments in infrastructure and training programs. The CTSA Consortium Child Health Oversight Committee has been particularly valuable in ensuring that the CTSA program works for the benefit of children by supporting pediatric researchers and trainees.

We support the NIH's efforts to promote translational research and urge the board to affirm its commitment to child and family health by including the following recommendations in any reorganization contemplated by the board: (1) any new structure should specifically establish child health research as a key priority; (2) a new IC for

translational research should support and promote the important role of NICHD and the CTSA Consortium Child Health Oversight Committee in advancing child health research; (3) the new structure should be cognizant of ongoing child health research conducted at NICHD and in other institutes and should work to facilitate translational research relevant to children across the institutes; and (4) in recognition of the clear need for training the next generation of clinical and translational research professionals with expertise in children, a reorganized translational research infrastructure should maintain its commitment to research training and career development programs.

Thank you for your consideration of our comments. We look forward to working with you to improve child health by maximizing opportunities to translate advances into pediatric care. Please do not hesitate to reach out to us as you move forward with your plans.

Sincerely,

Academic Pediatric Association  
American Academy of Pediatrics  
American Pediatric Society  
Association of Medical School Pediatric Department Chairs  
Society for Pediatric Research