

Public Comments Submitted to the National Institutes of Health Scientific Management Review Board

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February 23, 2011

FasterCures is a non-profit, non-partisan center dedicated to accelerating the progress of discovery and development of new medical solutions for deadly and debilitating diseases. As part of our mission we work across the disease spectrum with all the sectors in the medical system to improve the effectiveness and efficiency of biomedical research.

We applaud the Board's recommendations to create the National Center for Advancing Translational Sciences (NCATS) which expands NIH's investments in efforts to speed the translation of basic discoveries to clinical application. We view this as a significant development for the future of getting basic discoveries translated into much needed and long awaited treatments and cures.

NCATS has the potential to cut across institutional boundaries and address fundamental scientific and biomedical challenges regardless of disease type. This integration of efforts will produce synergy that will benefit Americans through improved health and more efficient and effective investment of their tax dollars.

The transition from basic research to clinical application requires interdisciplinary and multidisciplinary expertise. As we had outlined in a *FasterCures* whitepaper "Crossing Over the Valley of Death," many new drugs drop out of the development pipeline for a variety of reasons including lack of funding for critical translational studies and insufficient investment in the technical expertise needed for technology development and transfer. These barriers stand in the way of both the scientists dedicated to improving health and the patients who ultimately need improved cures and care.

We need to bridge the void between basic discoveries and better medicine. The steps in between discovery and application, like target validation, assay qualification, product refinement, and pre-clinical development are necessary investments to move promising new interventions to the patient. These areas of focus are often the bottleneck to moving drugs forward and exist across the drug development enterprise regardless of the disease.

We believe that NIH's proposed new center will provide a significant stimulus to moving ideas out of the lab and into the clinic and we fully support NIH's willingness to disrupt its own paradigm in search of better solutions.