

From: [Michelle Kienholz](#)
To: [SMRB \(NIH\OD\)](#)
Subject: Feb 23 SMRB Meeting
Date: Sunday, February 13, 2011 2:39:37 PM

Greetings –

I am writing to express my concern regarding the scheduled allotment of just two hours to the upcoming SMRB meeting, announced in the [Federal Register](#) but not, as yet, on the [SMRB Website](#), given the volume and importance of material to be discussed.

Page 21 of the [Report on Translational Medicine and Therapeutics](#) notes that as part of the motion approved at the December 7, 2010 SMRB meeting:

- The Board endorse and support the NIH's commitment to undertake a more extensive and detailed analysis through a transparent process to evaluate the impact of the new center on other relevant extant programs at NIH, including NCRR; and
- The NIH report their findings to the SMRB at its next meeting in approximately three months.

As Dr. Collins emphasized during the December 7th SMRB meeting, the TMAT Working Group was charged to assess only the potential value of a new center focused on translational medicine – not the potential consequences of creating this new entity, even though this went against the SMRB's own stated process as laid out in the [Report on Deliberating Organizational Change and Effectiveness](#).

Other agenda items mentioned in the Federal Register include discussion of the impact of NCATS on NCRR (which I assume would also include the redistribution of NCRR programs) and "next steps regarding future SMRB activities."

I find it rather irresponsible that the SMRB has allotted just two hours to present and deliberate the potential risks and benefits (anticipated and unintended) and overall impact on the rest of the NIH and the extramural research community of not only creating NCATS but also abolishing NCRR (an organizational change that has never been directly or specifically discussed by the SMRB).

Pointed concerns raised in the press, on the NIH Feedback site, by public comment speakers and scribes, by House staffers, and by senior Senators themselves suggest it is not in the interest of the NIH to minimize the priority and import of such deliberation, as is currently intimated by the time allotted on February 23rd and the less than transparent analysis processes to date.

I would certainly hope this meeting represents the first and not the only discussion of these issues and that no organizational changes will be formally implemented until a clear understanding of their consequences and plans to address contingencies (potential pitfalls!) have been demonstrated.

Best regards-

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