

January 4, 2011

Mr. Norman Augustine, Chair
Scientific Management Review Board
00, NIH Building 1, Room 103
9000 Rockville Pike
Bethesda, MD 20892
smrb@mail.nih.gov

Dear Mr. Augustine:

I write to you representing researchers, their staff members and veterinarians who conduct and support research using animal models at the University of Nebraska Medical Center. I would like to comment on the Translational Medicine and Therapeutics (TMAT) working group plans to create a new NIH institute of Translation Medicine and Therapeutics as described in their November 2010 report.

While the formation of this Institute or Center is an opportunity to advance translational and therapeutic medicine, there are some critical specific points that should be considered in order to avoid unnecessary potential risks to our nation's biomedical research infrastructure.

The Division of Comparative Medicine within the National Center for Research Resources (NCRR) has been key to advancing the United States' biomedical research mission. Support from this division has not only helped train critically needed professionals, such as veterinarians and veterinary scientists, to meet the demands of translation research, but also allowed support for key biomedical resources such as the Knockout Mouse Project, the Mutant Mouse Resource Centers, the Drosophila Stock Center, the Zebrafish Resource Center and the eight National Primate Research Centers. This support has provided key resources, efficiently and cost effectively, to facilitate our nation's biomedical research.

We appeal to the Scientific Management Review Board to give strong consideration to and seek expert input from the many comparative medicine veterinary scientists, specialists and research scientists to maintain the important mission of NCRR's Division of Comparative Medicine either independently, as it currently is placed within NCRR, or through intact transfer to the proposed Center for Translational Medicine and Therapeutics.

Sincerely,



FOR: Thomas H. Rosenquist, Ph.D.
Professor and Vice Chancellor for Research

Dr. Francis Collins (francis.collins@mail.nih.gov)
Dr. Arthur Rubenstein (smrb@mail.nih.gov)