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National Institutes of Health

RE: The proposal to create a new center for advancing translational medicine and therapeutics development and its impact on other programs at NIH, including the National Center for Research Resources.

To NIH Scientific Management Review Board:

I am writing to express my strong support for moving the NCRR Science Education Partnership Award program to the Office of the Director. This is a very important program that works to alert kids to science and scientific research at a young age, whether through in-class activities or science centers. I am a grantee, and much of my emphasis is on the US Affiliated Pacific Island Countries, particularly the Federated States of Micronesia. These areas are the developing countries under the protection of the US. However the educational infrastructure is not up to the US level. In fact, some of the classrooms that I saw when visiting our teachers last week did not have electricity.

Unfortunately these islands are sinking (or the water level is rising)! People there have little knowledge of conservation, resource utilization, microbiology, immunology, infectious disease or marine science. If anyone needs to understand oceanography, it is the people of Micronesia. However there is no standard science curriculum, much less microscopes for science training. There is no science infrastructure, so little interest and awareness of the possibilities. Therefore we are working with the 8th and 9th grade science teachers to get them the necessary training and resources to teach inquiry based science that incorporates career awareness. We believe this will empower the people of Micronesia to improve both themselves and their country. Without the assistance of educational programs such as SEPA, there will be minimal chance of advancement in science in the region.

Thank you for allowing me to express my support for maintaining the SEPA program and locating it in the Office of the Director.

Sincerely,

Kelley Withy, MD, PhD
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