



Statement by NIH Director Dr. Francis Collins on the future of substance use, abuse, and addiction-related research at NIH

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Contact: [NIH Office of Communications](#) 301-496-5787

Two years ago, the National Institutes of Health's Scientific Management Review Board (SMRB) issued a report recommending that NIH move to establish a new institute focused on substance use, abuse, and addiction-related research to optimize NIH research in these areas. Another option strongly considered by the SMRB was the functional integration of existing research resources, rather than creation of a new institute.

After rigorous review and extensive consultation with stakeholders, I have concluded that it is more appropriate for NIH to pursue functional integration, rather than major structural reorganization, to advance substance use, abuse, and addiction-related research. To that end, the National Institute on Drug Abuse (NIDA) and the National Institute on Alcohol Abuse and Alcoholism (NIAAA) will retain their institutional identities, while strengthening their ongoing efforts to work more closely with each other and with related research programs at other institutes and centers.

NIH has made significant progress in the last two years, coordinating research on substance use, abuse, and addiction across its various institutes and centers. This progress has bolstered my confidence that NIH can achieve the SMRB recommendations without structural reorganization. Moreover, given budget uncertainties, NIH must focus on advancing the entire biomedical research enterprise. The time, energy, and resources required for a major structural reorganization are not warranted, especially given that functional integration promises to achieve equivalent scientific and public health objectives. NIH will begin implementing this functional approach immediately, and develop metrics to ensure that we reach our goals to more effectively conduct and support research in these areas so vital to our nation's health.

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