



A Message from the Director

December 2013



Dear NIBIB Research Community,

The last few months have been replete with a range of unique challenges and opportunities. Following the government shutdown, the whole of NIH worked hard to regain a sense of normalcy. To date, nearly all of the previously cancelled grant review meetings have been rescheduled, allowing most applications submitted for early October deadlines to stay on track for funding consideration in January 2014.

Nevertheless, there are some time-related consequences. Though extraordinary efforts have been made to minimize the impact of the 16-day furlough on current and prospective grantees, regrettably, not every application will be able to be reviewed in time for this grant cycle. The latest information on grant review activities can be found on the [NIH Office of Extramural Research website](#). Also, active NIBIB funding opportunities can be found [here](#).

There are two forward-reaching activities occurring soon that should be noted:

- The [NCI-NIBIB Point of Care Technologies for Cancer Conference](#) has been rescheduled for January 8-10, 2014. This promises to promote discussions and collaborations among clinicians, researchers, and bioengineers to advance emerging technologies that can help meet global public health needs. The conference will feature talks that address various aspects of cancer and cutting-edge point-of-care technologies with potential for cancer detection, diagnosis and treatment. Over the two day conference, there will be 32 hands-on technology demonstration sessions and 80 poster presentations. Following this conference, there will also be a symposium sponsored by the NCI Center for Global Health that will focus on low-cost, portable technologies for use in limited resource settings. This is consistent with their recently issued global health funding opportunity announcement ([RFA-CA-13-015](#)).
- The [NIH Brain Research through Advancing Innovative Neurotechnologies \(BRAIN\) initiative](#), coordinated by four Institutes including NIBIB, is moving forward on a fast track with the [first six funding opportunities](#) released on December 17. First announced this April by President Obama, NIH quickly convened a working group of the Advisory Committee to the Director, to identify areas of high research priority for funding consideration. The [interim report](#), issued in September, describes the challenge as “mapping the circuits of the brain, measuring fluctuating patterns of electrical and chemical activity flowing within those circuits, and understanding how their interplay creates our unique cognitive and behavioral capabilities.” The report also lays out six core principles and nine research priorities to guide implementation. Included among the research priorities are integrating theory, modeling, statistics, and computation with experimentation; developing new large-scale network recording capabilities; and creating structural maps of the brain. NIH is committing \$40 million toward this initiative in FY 2014. These opportunities should be of interest to inventive bioengineers and imaging scientists.

Just this week, Congress passed a 2014 budget bill that averts another shutdown in the ensuing months. Nonetheless, the budget details for NIH remain unknown at this time. We anticipate learning more during the next round of appropriation discussions that will occur over the next month leading to January 15, 2014, the date of expiration of the current continuing resolution.

Overall we are encouraged by our great scientific opportunities to improve the human condition through biomedical creativity and innovation as we optimize the use of available resources. Should you have any suggestions, concerns, or questions, please direct those to Kate Egan at kegan@mail.nih.gov, 301-496-3500.

Sincerely,

Roderic I. Pettigrew, PhD, MD
Director, National Institute of Biomedical Imaging and Bioengineering