

Response to NOT-DK-21-025 Request for Information: National Institute of Diabetes and Digestive and Kidney Diseases (NIDDK) Strategic Plan Draft Document

Submitted August 31, 2021

The Endocrine Society appreciates the opportunity to comment on the draft National Institute of Diabetes and Digestive and Kidney Diseases (NIDDK) Strategic Plan. Founded in 1916, the Endocrine Society is the world's oldest, largest, and most active organization devoted to research on hormones and the clinical practice of endocrinology. Our membership of over 18,000 includes NIDDK-funded clinical, translational, and basic scientists studying complex endocrine pathways, systems, and diseases. We reviewed the draft plan with great interest and thank you for including many important concepts and research opportunities that our members identified in our July 2020 response to the request for information (NOT-DK-20-015). While the entire plan includes many important themes and goals, we identify several specific priorities following from our earlier comments that we encourage NIDDK to retain in the final strategic plan.

- Recognition of environmental contributors to health and disease as described in Research Opportunity 1.2 which highlights opportunities “from investigative approaches on topics such as... how environmental, chemical, or other exposures can disrupt metabolic and organ function...” as well as seeking “opportunities to collaborate and break down “silos” with its external partners; NIH Institutes, Centers, and Offices...”
- Within Research Opportunity 1.1, research to help us understand how “biological pathways throughout the body are also affected by factors such as nutrition... and day/night cycles (circadian rhythm)” and how “research in these areas can yield deeper insight into many diseases.”
- Within Research Opportunity 3.5, the call for an emphasis on multidisciplinary studies to enhance dissemination and implementation research. Also, in the ‘vision’ section calling for “empowering a multidisciplinary research community” and fostering training for a multidisciplinary research workforce.
- Within Research Opportunity 2.1, the development of precision medicine approaches that acknowledge how treatment responses vary from person to person, including among different age groups. Also, the call for bedside-to-bench research on successful interventions to explore their mechanistic bases and expand their therapeutic potential.
- Within Scientific Goal 4, the inclusion of patient advocacy groups as an important stakeholder group.

In addition, there are several cross-cutting themes that we enthusiastically support. The draft plan often notes the importance of studying health disparities in the context of diseases within NIDDK's mission, and we are glad to see that NIDDK will continue to prioritize research on the causes of



health disparities and how these disparities can be eliminated in the context of development and testing of diagnostics, therapeutics, and prevention. We also support the plan's acknowledgement of the need to increase the diversity of participants in clinical trials to help understand the underpinnings of health disparities. Moreover, we were glad to see basic research highlighted throughout the draft plan, both in the context of research objectives and as a training objective to encourage recruitment of students into basic science areas within NIDDK's mission.

In conclusion, we applaud NIDDK's efforts towards developing a well-crafted and thoughtful Strategic Plan. We look forward to the release of the final document, and to contribute as active collaborators in the implementation of the Plan.