

**Department Of Health and Human Services
Public Health Service
National Institutes of Health
National Advisory Neurological Disorders and Stroke Council**

**Summary of Meeting¹
May 14-15, 2025**

The National Advisory Neurological Disorders and Stroke (NANDS) Council was convened for its 226th meeting on May 14-15, 2025, via Microsoft Teams. Dr. Walter Koroshetz, Director of the National Institute of Neurological Disorders and Stroke (NINDS), served as Chairperson.

In accordance with Public Law 92-463, the meeting was:

Open: May 14, 2025: 10:00 a.m. to 5:30 p.m. for the review and discussion of program development, needs, and policy; and
Closed: May 15, 2025: 10:00 a.m. to 11:30 a.m. for the consideration of individual grant applications.

Councilmembers present: Dr. Amy Brin Dr. Robert Brown Jr. Dr. Yishi Jin Dr. Jane Larkindale Dr. Jin-Moo Lee Dr. John H.R. Maunsell Dr. Louise McCullough Dr. Hank Paulson	Subject Matter Experts: Dr. Sepideh Amin-Hanjani Dr. Graeme Davis Dr. Lynn DeBar Daniel Doctoroff Dr. Hector Gonzalez Dr. Frances Jensen Dr. Amy McGuire Kate Nicholson Dr. Roy Sillitoe Ex officio members present: Dr. Stuart Hoffman Dr. Terry Rauch
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Council Roster (Attachment 1)

NINDS employees and members of the public in attendance (Attachment 2)

The meeting was held virtually via [NIH Videocast](#) and Microsoft Teams.

¹For the record, it is noted that members absent themselves from the meeting when the Council is discussing applications (a) from their respective institutions or (b) in which a real or apparent conflict of interest might occur.

OPEN PORTION OF THE MEETING

I. Call to Order and Opening Remarks

Dr. Walter Koroshetz, Director, NINDS

Dr. Ann Poduri, Deputy Director, NINDS

Dr. Andrea Meredith, Director, Division of Extramural Activities, NINDS

Dr. Koroshetz welcomed Councilmembers, visitors, and staff to the 226th meeting of the National Advisory Neurological Disorders and Stroke (NANDS) Council and introduced two new Ad Hoc Councilmembers, Ms. Geraldine Acuna-Sunshine and Dr. Lynn DeBar.

Dr. Koroshetz invited Dr. Poduri and Dr. Meredith to share their vision for NINDS. Dr. Poduri spoke about the importance of staying mission-focused, supporting early-stage researchers and trainees, and promoting communication with the community. Dr. Meredith briefly reviewed the scope of current funding announcements and spoke about the impact of NIH's new simplified approval process on the NINDS extramural mission. She extended appreciation to the many NINDS staff who were part of the government-wide reduction in force or have recently retired.

II. Report of the Director, Division of Extramural Activities, NINDS

Dr. Andrea Meredith, Director, Division of Extramural Activities, NINDS

A. Approval of Council Minutes — There were no minutes to approve at this meeting.

B. The following future Council meeting dates were confirmed:

Potential for August 2025 date TBD

Wednesday and Thursday, September 3-4, 2025

Wednesday and Thursday, February 11-12, 2026

Wednesday and Thursday, May 20-21, 2026

Wednesday and Thursday, September 9-10, 2026

C. Other Items

Expedited Review Process — In advance of each Council meeting, a subset of Councilmembers are asked to approve a certain number of grant applications. This expedited review process focuses on applications with scores within the payline for which there are no unresolved issues. During this Council round, there were 89 applications that were eligible to be expedited. Dr. Meredith thanked Councilmembers, Dr. Yishi Jin, Dr. Jane Larkindale, and Dr. Jin-Moo Lee for their review of these applications.

Extramural Announcements — All extramural announcements were posted to the NINDS Electronic Council Book (ECB).

NINDS Triennial Report on the Inclusion of Women and Minorities as Participants in Clinical Research — Council voted to approve the report.

III. The MICrONS Project: Functional and Structural Reconstruction of Neural Circuits at Scale

Dr. John Ngai, Director, BRAIN® Initiative

Dr. Ngai provided a brief overview of the Brain Research Through Advancing Innovative Neurotechnologies® (BRAIN) Initiative's [Machine Intelligence from Cortical Networks \(MICrONS\) Project](#), which is a large research consortium initially organized by the Intelligence Advanced Research Projects Activity (IARPA). The MICrONS Project reconstructed one cubic millimeter of neurons from a mouse cortex into a wiring diagram, then overlaid it with a functional model of neural activity. This established a model of neural activity that could predict responses to novel stimuli. The model also set the stage for the BRAIN Initiative's [Connectivity Across Scales \(BRAIN CONNECTS\)](#) program. Dr. Ngai added that the BRAIN Initiative was celebrating its [10th anniversary](#).

IV. NIH Director Update

Dr. Jayanta Bhattacharya, Director, National Institutes of Health

Dr. Bhattacharya began his update by reviewing new NIH leadership, which included Dr. Matthew Memoli as Principal Deputy Director, Ms. Seana Cranston as Chief of Staff, Mr. Eric Schnabel as Chief Operating Officer, and Mr. James McElroy as Deputy Chief of Staff. He also announced a number of new Acting Directors across the Institutes, including Dr. Courtney Aclin of the National Institute of Nursing Research, Dr. Alison Cernich of the *Eunice Kennedy Shriver* National Institute of Child Health and Human Development, Dr. Monica Webb Hooper of the National Institute on Minority Health and Health Disparities, Dr. Andrea Beckel-Mitchener of the National Institute of Mental Health, Dr. Carolyn Hutter of the National Human Genome Research Institute, and Dr. Jeff Taubenberger of the National Institute of Allergy and Infectious Diseases.

Dr. Bhattacharya shared his vision for the future of NIH. He asserted that there is a decline in public trust in the scientific community. The [Pew poll](#) he referenced indicated “confidence in scientists is up slightly but remains lower than before the pandemic”. Premised on his claim of declining public trust in science, Dr. Bhattacharya delivered five ideas to restore the public's trust. First, NIH should improve population health by focusing on the needs that impact most Americans. Dr. Bhattacharya noted that NINDS was already focused on the neurological diseases that impacted many people. Second, NIH should ensure reliable scientific results by rewarding replication, reproducibility, and generalizability. He said that this could be achieved by funding replication studies, promoting the publication of replication results, and rewarding prosocial scientific behaviors such as data sharing. Third, NIH should invest in innovative research that promoted major, rather than incremental, advances. Dr. Bhattacharya emphasized the need to focus on newer ideas and encourage scientific risk-taking. Fourth, NIH should maintain safety and transparency by implementing the highest ethical standards and not endangering humans. Finally, NIH should encourage academic freedom and a culture in which scientists could respectfully disagree.

Dr. Bhattacharya also reviewed NIH successes that occurred within the first 100 days of the new administration. These included the launch of a study on the etiology of autism, a new policy to encourage human-based research over the use of animal models, a new public access policy to ensure that NIH research was more easily licensable by companies around the world, a new policy

to promote academic freedom by lessening the oversight of publications, a new program called [Generation Gold Standard](#) that would lead the next generation of flu vaccines, improve the safety and security of biological research – he expounded upon his concerns of gain-of-function research. Improved oversight of foreign subawards – citing this would facilitate access to notebooks of foreign collaborators such as Wuhan lab and understanding the root causes of diet-related chronic diseases in collaboration with the FDA.

Discussion

Council members thanked for Dr. Bhattacharya's presentation. Several Councilmembers asked for clarification about the focus on human research over animal models. Dr. Bhattacharya noted that many important advances came from animal models and clarified that animal studies could be funded if there was a direct path to translation in humans. The shift was about prioritizing human-based outcomes, and asking researchers to justify use of animal models, not eradicate them. Councilmembers underscored the value of non-human based research and pioneering discoveries resulting from non-human model systems.

Other Councilmembers asked about the focus on population health, specifically to better understand how NIH could best translate and implement prevention research. Dr. Bhattacharya emphasized the importance of engaging communities as partners in the research process and reaffirmed his commitment to NIH addressing the health needs of minority communities in the US. While expressing his commitment to address the health needs of all Americans, he noted that it was important for NIH to remain apolitical and focused on concrete science. He cited the autism etiology study as an example. Rather than prejudging certain studies, such as those that explore vaccines and autism, the autism study would focus on the questions important to the public. He said that this approach would go a long way toward restoring public trust in science.

A Councilmember asked about disruptions to important clinical studies. Dr. Bhattacharya responded that he was committed to avoiding any disruption to patient care and ensuring that large-scale clinical trials continue. Other Councilmembers asked about health economics and bioethics research within the restructuring of NIH. Dr. Bhattacharya said that both topics would be an important part of the NIH portfolio going forward.

V. Report of the NINDS Director and Discussion

Dr. Walter Koroshetz, Director, NINDS

NINDS 75th Anniversary – Dr. Koroshetz announced that 2025 marked the [75th anniversary of NINDS](#). Although NIH staff involvement with some of the celebratory events had been curtailed by travel restrictions earlier in the year, several professional organizations stepped in to ensure the events were held. Dr. Koroshetz said that the travel restrictions are now lifted, and NIH staff are looking forward to participating in a number of upcoming events.

NIH and NINDS Leadership Changes – Dr. Koroshetz briefly reviewed the NIH leadership changes that Dr. Bhattacharya announced and added that Dr. Larry Tabak, Dr. Michael Lauer, and Mr. John Burklow retired from their NIH positions. Dr. Jon Lorsch is Acting NIH Deputy Director for Extramural Research and Dr. Nicole Kleinstreuer is Acting NIH Deputy Director for Program Coordination.

Dr. Koroshetz announced NINDS leadership changes. Dr. Rod Corriveau, Dr. Stephen Korn, Dr. Linda Porter, Dr. Lyn Jakeman, Dr. Ernie Lyons, Ms. Maryann Sofranko, Dr. Michelle Jones-London, and Dr. Dave Owens retired from their positions. Dr. Amy Bany Adams is now Deputy Director for Scientific Management and Operations and Acting Executive Officer. Dr. Pat Bellgowan is Acting Director of the Division of Neuroscience. Dr. Jordan Gladman is Acting Deputy Executive Officer. Dr. Letitia Weigand is Director of the Office of Training & Workforce Development.

NINDS News – Dr. Koroshetz provided an overview of some of the changes that NINDS faces going forward. The government-wide reduction in force has impacted NINDS, with 143 staff members lost. These losses were almost entirely within the Division of Extramural Research and the Office of the Director, impacting the offices responsible for communications, policy, ethics, management, and acquisition. Dr. Koroshetz added that 11 intramural principal investigators had been erroneously fired by HHS under the reduction in force, albeit NINDS is working towards their reinstatement by June 2, 2025. As a result of these reductions, several NINDS activities had been paused, with remaining NINDS staff taking on additional responsibilities. Certain NINDS activities will be centralized at NIH or HHS. Restrictions on some activities, such as meetings, travel, communications, and acquisitions, have recently been lifted.

Dr. Koroshetz talked about upcoming changes to NIH grant operations that would impact NINDS. Institute-level study sections would be centralized under the NIH Center for Scientific Review (CSR), which may require greater levels of scrutiny from Program Directors and Councilmembers, particularly for large, specialized programs, such as HEAL[®] and BRAIN[®] that are primarily reviewed by NINDS special emphasis panels. The new administration has also mandated a 50 percent NIH-wide reduction in Notice of Funding Opportunity (NOFO) announcements and a greater use of Parent Announcements. In addition, all NOFOs will require HHS approval before being made publicly available. Foreign subawards are halted while a new foreign award justification process is developed. Dr. Koroshetz noted that some projects with collaborators from another country had been canceled because they did not include foreign justification and cautioned investigators to include that going forward.

NINDS Budget – Dr. Koroshetz said that the President's Budget is calling for a 40 percent NIH-wide budget decrease (nearly \$18 billion) for fiscal year (FY) 2026 but noted that it was uncertain how that would impact individual Institutes. In addition, there was uncertainty about the future of co-led programs, such as the HEAL Initiative[®] and the BRAIN Initiative[®], as well as other specialized programs for Alzheimer's disease and related dementias (AD/ADRD) and the Undiagnosed Disease Network.

Dr. Koroshetz discussed NINDS strategies to expend its Congressional appropriations, describing the process of NINDS' ability to multiyear fund awards - Multiyear funding grants in one fiscal year, frees up funds in future fiscal years for new competing awards, protecting the NINDS payline. In the interim NINDS is using a conservative payline at the 8th percentile as it awaits clarity on Congressional appropriations. He commented on the increasing cost of conducting research, which is generally tied to inflation, and that the number of PIs supported on NINDS administered R01-equivalent grants has been steadily increasing since 2015.

Dr. Koroshetz emphasized that NINDS remained committed to funding as many investigators as possible, protecting programs for trainees and early-stage investigators, supporting research to help the elimination of all health disparities and inequities in neurological conditions and care, and continuing its contribution to the broader neuroscience ecosystem.

NINDS Updates – Dr. Koroshetz explained the programs impacted by the shift from NINDS special emphasis panel review such as training and career programs as well as the HEAL® and BRAIN® Initiatives over to the center for scientific review (CSR). NINDS has been able to support an increasing number of investigators, noting the impact of Congressionally mandated programs such as HEAL®, BRAIN® and AD/ADRD.

Dr. Koroshetz highlighted ways to stay informed on the latest NINDS funding updates such as [NIH Guide for Grants and Contracts](#) or via [Find Your NINDS Program Officer](#) Portal and other resources such as [NIH Matchmaker](#), which identify Program Officers most closely associated to text input by the user.

Dr. Koroshetz indicated [2024 NIH Public Access Policy](#) will be effective July 1, 2025 ([NOT-OD-25-101](#)). Per the policy, NIH-funded researchers must submit manuscripts to the National Library of Medicine's PubMed Central® upon acceptance of a peer-reviewed publication and be made freely available to the public after the official date of publication with no period of embargo.

Dr. Koroshetz stated the [NIH HEAL Initiative 2025 Annual Report](#) reflected HEAL® accomplishments, including: promising new classes of non-opioid pain relievers; new personalized treatment strategies for chronic low back pain; and treating chronic pain in children and adolescents.

He highlighted the NINDS 2022-2024 Triennial Report on the Inclusion of Women and Minorities as Participants in Clinical Research and NINDS advances in innovative science, translation from discovery into therapies. He highlighted the impact of the [Small Business](#) and the [Epilepsy Therapy Screening](#) programs. He reiterated NINDS' commitment to sharing reproducible data.

Dr. Koroshetz noted several NINDS scientists who were recently honored for their achievements, including Dr. Jeff Diamond, Dr. Antonina Roll-Mecak, Dr. Avindra Nath, Dr. Ling-Gang Wu, Dr. Sonja Scholz, and Dr. Sadhana Jackson. He acknowledged intramural investigators Dr. Sadhana Jackson; Dr. Sonja Scholz, and extramural NINDS-funded awardees Dr. Jayeeta Basu; Dr. Marni Boppart; Ekta Khurana; Dr. Mercedes Paredes; Dr. Kanaka Rajan; Dr. Lindsay Schwarz; Dr. Dionna Williams as recipients of the [Presidential Early Career Award for Scientists and Engineers](#), the highest honor bestowed by the U.S. government on outstanding scientists and engineers early in their careers.

Dr. Koroshetz invited the community to join the [2025 NINDS Nonprofit Forum](#) on June 25, 2025, in Bethesda.

Discussion of Director's Report

Councilmembers expressed gratitude for Dr. Koroshetz's leadership during these uncertain times. Several Councilmembers addressed the public's perception of NIH research and suggested a coordinated communication effort, such as the development of easy-to-digest narratives on scientific advances and alignment with the new administration's priorities for health. Dr.

Koroshetz agreed that better communication with the public was needed, underlining the fact that federal civil servants are prohibited from engaging in advocacy efforts in their official capacity. Since NIH research is dependent on budget appropriations, he suggested that patient groups, professional organizations, universities, and other trusted community groups could share messages about NIH's value to Congress.

Councilmembers emphasized the need to ensure that neuroscience and neurology experts are on review panels at CSR. Dr. Koroshetz noted that NINDS scientific review staff are moving to CSR and will provide scientific subject matter expertise. He noted the consideration required at NINDS to making funding decisions on specialized programs such as clinical trials, phased awards, Brain Initiative, and HEAL Initiative. Dr. Poduri reminded the scientific community of the importance of expertise on the CSR panels and to sign up for review when asked. A Councilmember asked whether the caution that NINDS was using to not overspend its FY25 budget might negatively impact future appropriations. Dr. Koroshetz assured the Council that NINDS spends all its appropriated funds each year, applying multi-year funding as part of its stewardship of appropriations. Another Councilmember asked about the next steps for the proposed 40 percent NIH budget reduction. Dr. Koroshetz answered that since the House and President's budget were aligned on the proposed budget reduction, the Senate held the most influence over the next steps.

VI. Neural Exposome Research Priorities Implementation Plan

Dr. David Jett, Program Director, Office of Neural Exposome & Toxicology, NINDS

Dr. Shardell Spriggs, Office of Neural Exposome & Toxicology, NINDS

Dr. Richard Woychik, Director, National Institute of Environmental Health Sciences

Dr. Woychik introduced the concept of the exposome. Completion of the Human Genome Project in the early 2000s revolutionized how scientists could study complex human traits associated with health. However, it is known that environmental, social, and lifestyle factors interact with genetics to impact health. The exposome refers to the complex synergy of all non-genetic factors beginning as early as preconception and continuing across the lifespan. It was important to develop a new research framework for scientists to understand the complexities of the exposome, including an understanding of which data to collect, when and how to collect it, and how to evaluate it in a meaningful way.

It was also important to coordinate global efforts to accelerate this understanding, much like international collaboration accelerated the completion of the Human Genome Project. The [Network for Exposomics in the U.S. \(NEXUS\)](#) was established to build a Global Community of Practice for researchers in the United States to coordinate efforts with the European Human Exposome Network. The [Exposome Moonshot Forum](#), held in Washington, D.C. May 12-15, 2025, was the inaugural event of this international effort.

Dr. Jett conveyed that most diseases cannot be explained by genetics alone and that studying the neural exposome could unlock the underlying causes—and eventually the prevention—of neurological diseases and disorders. He noted that although neurological diseases account for a significant burden on the health of Americans, less than one percent of NIH grants focus on neural exposome research. He introduced the NINDS Council's [Neural Exposome Top \(NEXT\) Priorities](#)

[Working Group](#), which identified [six research priority areas](#) that would have the highest impact: 1) identifying factors that influence neurological health, 2) conducting fundamental mechanistic research on these factors, 3) evaluating these factors in human populations, 4) creating a multidisciplinary pool of investigators, 5) developing resources and tools to assess the neural exposome, and 6) fostering collaboration and partnerships to accelerate and amplify the research.

Dr. Spriggs talked about the NINDS Neural Exposome Implementation Working Group, which was formed to develop the actionable steps needed to implement the NEXT Priorities. The Implementation Working Group identified five focus areas: 1) fostering partnerships and amplifying research, 2) leveraging resources and tools, 3) training investigators and building multidisciplinary teams, 4) convening workshops, and 5) supporting neural exposome research.

Dr. Spriggs highlighted recent accomplishments such as establishing the NIH Environmental Neuroscience Working Group co-led by NINDS and the National Institute of Environmental Health Sciences, funding the [NEXUS Center](#), planning their [first workshop](#) in January 2026 on the cumulative effect of multiple exposome factors across the lifespan, and launching the NIH Brain & Body Exposome Seminar Series. Dr. Spriggs pointed out that understanding the neural exposome was the most promising approach for preventing chronic disease and increasing health span.

Discussion

Councilmembers asked whether neural exposome research would include the complexities of traumatic brain injury, such as the potential interaction between disruptions to the blood-brain barrier and exacerbating effects of toxin exposures. Dr. Jett and Dr. Woychik answered that traumatic brain injury was a critically important part of the exposome and that better understanding as to how synergistic effects impacted outcomes was a challenge that the Exposome Moonshot Project was undertaking.

Other Councilmembers emphasized the importance of explicitly communicating to the public the magnitude of complexities involved in neural exposome research and suggested starting with a focus on certain disease areas. Dr. Jett noted that the Human Genome Project was similarly complex, but it was important to take a first step. Over time, new tools and resources continued to help move the Human Genome Project forward. Dr. Spriggs and Dr. Woychik talked about how the Exposome Moonshot Project was focused on operationalizing exposome research by first understanding the scope of available tools and knowledge.

Councilmembers voted to approve the Neural Exposome Research Priorities Implementation Plan, noting that funding was dependent on future budget considerations.

VII. State of Intramural Report

Dr. Jeffrey Diamond, Scientific Director, NINDS

Dr. Diamond announced staff changes in the Intramural Research Program. Dr. Lucy Forrest was named Deputy Scientific Director. The tenure pipeline gained new people including Dr. Christopher Grunseich, Dr. Amreen Mughal, Dr. Ariel Levine, Dr. Sonja Scholz, Dr. Derek

Narendra, and Dr. Yi Gu. There were a number of retirements, including Dr. David Goldstein, Dr. David Sibley, and Dr. Wei Lu. Dr. Diamond honored the memory of four investigators who were lost this year: Dr. Bob Burke, Dr. Peter Fisherman, Dr. Thomas Reese, and Dr. John Hallenbeck. Due to a coding error, NINDS intramural staff were erroneously included in the government-wide reduction in force (RIF) on April 1, 2025. NINDS hopes the error will be rectified by rescinding the RIF notices prior to June 2, 2025.. Dr. Diamond noted that the 11 RIF'd senior investigators oversaw large laboratories that employed 96 additional staff, including many early-stage investigators.

Dr. Diamond highlighted the exceptional achievement of two intramural investigators, Dr. Sadhana Jackson, and Dr. Sonja Scholz who received the [Presidential Early Career Award for Scientists and Engineers](#), the highest honor bestowed by the U.S. government on outstanding scientists and engineers early in their careers.

On the policy front, Dr. Diamond indicated the NIH Fellows United finalized a collective bargaining agreement with the United Auto Workers union that went into effect in January 2025. The Office of Intramural Training and Education is developing universal policies and guidelines to satisfy the requirements of this agreement. In addition, the Staff Scientist and Clinician Association is another organizational effort that provides leadership training, career development and peer networking for senior scientists and clinicians.

Dr. Diamond reviewed several intramural science advances:

- Dr. Kareem Zaghloul's lab recently published a [study](#) that showed distinct neural firing patterns in human cortices associated with viewing different object types (i.e., animal, place, person).
- Dr. Mark Wagner's lab published a [study](#) that demonstrated how mice learned to change their motor actions in anticipation of a delayed reward.
- Dr. Yi Gu's lab published a virtual reality [study](#) showing that some cells in the medial entorhinal cortex were multimodal and responded to both auditory and visual spatial information, while other cells responded selectively to one or the other.
- Dr. Wei Lu's lab published a [study](#) on the molecular mechanisms underlying alcohol use, demonstrating that TMEM132B, a protein known to be reduced in humans with alcohol use disorder, was associated with a GABA_A receptor important for controlling sensitivity to alcohol satiety.
- Dr. Derek Narendra's lab published a [study](#) on how a mitochondrial protein called DELE1 responds to different mitochondrial stressors, which can impact the development of myopathies in the heart and skeletal muscles. Dr. Diamond highlighted the Intramural Program's focus on the root causes of chronic diseases.

Discussion

Councilmembers proposed and then all Councilmembers voted to approve the motion that they will submit a request to the NIH Director, that the positions of the 11 senior NINDS intramural research investigators who were erroneously part of the April 1, 2025, reduction in force be reinstated. The Councilmembers noted the research of these intramural investigators align with

the NIH Director's priorities to *advance the nation's understanding brain health and eradicating chronic disease*.

VIII. Report from the HEAL Pain Strategic Research Priorities Working Group

Dr. Walter Koroshetz, Director, NINDS

Dr. Robert Gereau, Co-Chair HEAL Pain Strategic Research Priorities Working Group

Dr. Kathleen Sluka, Co-Chair HEAL Pain Strategic Research Priorities Working Group

Dr. Koroshetz provided an overview of the [HEAL \(Helping to End Addiction Long-term\) Initiative](#) and introduced members of the [HEAL Pain Strategic Research Priorities Working Group](#). Dr. Gereau acknowledged NIH's Dr. Jackie Ward for her service as the Designated Federal Official for this effort. Despite a history of service to NIH and the White House, as a function of HHS coding of positions, she was subject to the April 1, 2025, reduction in force.

The HEAL Initiative was launched by Congress in 2018 as a crisis measure to address the opioid epidemic by researching opioid addiction, developing opioid alternatives, and offering proven approaches to pain management, and addiction treatment. Since the onset of the federal response to the opioid addiction crisis, the [Federal Pain Research Strategy](#) and the NIH series of Cutting Edge Science Meetings to End the Opioid Crisis helped define the [HEAL Research Strategy](#), which informed the initial set of NIH funding opportunities for pain research.

The HEAL Pain Strategic Research Priorities Working Group was formed in 2024 to develop recommendations to address pain research to improve the lives of Americans, through NIH supported research. Feedback was gathered from the public, which helped to coalesce seven subcommittees charged with deliberating specific focus areas: 1) health equity and pain across the life course, 2) non-addictive therapeutics development, 3) pain biomarkers and predictors, 4) optimization of interventions to improve pain, 5) implementation and health services, 6) intersection of pain and substance use disorder, and 7) pain research workforce and training. Each subcommittee formed specific research priorities for their focus area, which were synthesized into five core principles and 10 overarching research priorities to advance the HEAL Pain Mission. Dr. Gereau reviewed the five core principles, which were to 1) involve people with lived experience in research, 2) educate the public and providers, 3) use methodological principles for preclinical and clinical trials, 4) employ interdisciplinary teams, and 5) conduct secondary analyses of existing data and biological samples.

Dr. Gereau and Dr. Sluka reviewed the 10 research priorities for [HEAL Pain research](#), which are to:

- A. Support fellowships, career development, and mentorship to foster continued growth of the pain research workforce and provide targeted opportunities to develop impactful careers.
- B. Develop mechanistically varied and highly efficacious pain therapeutic pharmaceuticals to support existing HEAL research on small molecules and new therapeutic modalities.
- C. Invest in discovery research in human biology to develop novel therapeutics, support the identification of high-quality targets, and develop a new generation of highly predictive disease models.

- D. Develop strategies to prevent the development of chronic pain throughout the lifespan and support the development and testing of screening tools, biomarkers, and primary and secondary pain prevention approaches.
- E. Develop biomarkers to predict treatment response, safety, and target engagement; provide surrogate endpoints for clinical trials; and support rigorous validation trials.
- F. Evaluate whether individualized, tailored, and mechanism-based treatments improved outcomes would help develop pain “signatures” and test personalized approaches.
- G. Test evidence-based guidance for appropriate initial pain therapies to help achieve maximal benefit for patients without undue risk, explore different combinations and timing of all therapies, and understand non-specific effects.
- H. Prioritize clinical- and community-embedded research, implementation studies, and pragmatic trials to help align research with real-world settings, assess the integration of decision-making tools and integrated care models, and promote the implementation of high-value interventions while de-implementing low-value interventions.
- I. Identify populations disproportionately impacted by both pain and substance use and understand the mechanisms that differentially impact these populations to help identify and test high-impact interventions, foster the equitable implementation of evidence-informed approaches, and promote community involvement to support health equity.
- J. Support research on non-drug approaches for treatment and prevention of chronic pain in individuals with co-occurring substance use disorder to help tailor and improve the use of evidence-based approaches for this population.

Dr. Sluka acknowledged the NIH staff who supported the development of these recommendations.

Discussion

Councilmembers expressed support for the recommendations and emphasized the need to communicate the recommendations and the advances made by the HEAL Initiative in plain language for the general public. They also expressed concern about the alignment of the recommendations with the new administration’s priorities, as well as the inclusion of equity language. Dr. Gereau and Dr. Sluka agreed about the importance of communicating with the public and noted that the working group discussed concerns about alignment with the administration’s priorities before developing the final recommendations. Dr. Koroshetz shared a [report](#) on HEAL Initiative advances and talked about how these breakthroughs were positively impacting the pain industry and patients.

The Council voted to accept the HEAL Pain Strategic Research Priorities Working Group recommendations.

IX. Initiatives for Concept Clearance

Dr. Andrea Meredith, Director, Division of Extramural Activities, NINDS

Dr. Meredith said there was a new approval process for concept clearances, in which both NIH and HHS must clear concepts before presenting them to Council. One new concept was presented.

Concept 1: The NINDS Human Biospecimen and Data Repository. *Lead: Dr. Rebecca Price, Program Manager, Division of Neuroscience*

The Council voted to approve this proposed concept.

Other Business

Dr. Meredith said there was one written public comment from Dr. Jerrod Bailey for the Physicians Committee for Responsible Medicine. Council could read the public comment in the ECB.

IX. Adjournment

The open session of the meeting was adjourned at 5:30 p.m. on Wednesday, May 14, 2025

CLOSED PORTION OF THE MEETING

X. Review of Conflict of Interest, Confidentiality, and Council Consideration of Pending Applications

This portion of the meeting was closed to the public in accordance with the determination that it was concerned with matters exempt from mandatory disclosure under sections 552b(c)(4) and 552b(c)(6), Title 5 U.S.C., and section 1009(d) of the Federal Advisory Committee Act, as amended (5 U.S.C. §§ 1001-1014).

Members absented themselves from the meeting during discussion of and voting on applications from their own institutions, or other applications in which there was a potential conflict of interest, real or apparent.

Conflict of Interest – Regulations concerning conflict of interest were reviewed. Councilmembers were reminded that materials furnished for review purposes and discussion during the closed portions of the meeting are considered privileged information. All Councilmembers present signed a statement certifying that they had not been involved in any conflict-of-interest situations during the review of grant applications.

Confidentiality – During the closed session, any information that is discussed and the outcome of any recommendation are considered privileged information. They may not be discussed outside of the closed session. If an applicant requests support for his or her application from a Councilmember, the Councilmember must respond that he/she is not permitted to discuss the application. Any inquiry should be referred to Dr. Andrea Meredith NINDS Advisory Council Executive Secretary, who then will refer the question to the appropriate staff member for response.

Research Training and Career Development Programs – The Council reviewed a total of 398 research career development and institutional training grant applications with primary assignment to NINDS, and 222 of them (56 percent) were scored in the amount of \$28.1 million first-year direct costs. It is anticipated that, of the research career development and institutional training grant applications competing at this Council, NINDS will be able to pay first-year direct costs of approximately \$9.2 million (103 grants).

Research Project and Center Awards – The Council reviewed a total of 2,020 research project and center applications with primary assignment to NINDS, and 1,094 of them (54 percent) were

scored/percentiled in the amount of \$477.3 million first-year direct costs. It is anticipated that, of the research grants competing at this Council, NINDS will be able to pay first-year direct costs of approximately \$91.9 million (222 grants).

Senator Jacob Javits Neuroscience Investigator Awards – The Senator Jacob Javits Neuroscience Investigator Awards are made to distinguished investigators who have a record of scientific excellence and productivity, who are actively pursuing an area of research of strategic importance, and who can be expected to continue to be highly productive for a seven-year period. Candidates are nominated and selected at each Council meeting. Council approved three Javits nominations at this meeting: Sami Barmada, M.D., Ph.D. (University of Michigan), Maria Castro, Ph.D. (University of Michigan), Eric (James) Gouaux, Ph.D. (Oregon Health & Science University), and Fan Wang, Ph.D. (Massachusetts Institute of Technology).

Small Business Innovation Research and Small Business Technology Transfer Award Programs –The Council reviewed a total of 211 Small Business Innovation Research (SBIR) and Small Technology Transfer Award (STTR) grant applications with primary assignment to NINDS, and 103 of them (49 percent) were scored in the amount of \$62.3 million first-year direct costs. It is anticipated that, of the SBIR and STTR applications competing at this Council, NINDS will be able to pay first-year direct costs of approximately \$9 million (14 grants).

We certify that, to the best of our knowledge, the foregoing minutes and attachments are accurate and complete.

XI. Adjournment

The meeting was adjourned at 11:30 a.m. on Thursday, May 15, 2025.

We certify that, to the best of our knowledge, the foregoing minutes and attachments are accurate and complete.



Andrea Meredith, Ph.D.
Executive Secretary
National Advisory Neurological Disorders and Stroke Council
Director, Division of Extramural Activities
National Institute of Neurological Disorders and Stroke



Walter Koroshetz, M.D.
Chairperson
National Advisory Neurological Disorders and Stroke Council
Director, National Institute of Neurological Disorders and Stroke

These minutes will be formally considered by the Council at its next meeting. Corrections or notations will be incorporated in the minutes of that meeting.

**National Advisory Neurological Disorders and Stroke Council
Roster for Spring 2025 Council Meeting
May 14-15, 2025**

Walter J. Koroshetz, M.D. (Chairperson)
Director, National Institute of Neurological
Disorders and Stroke
National Institutes of Health
Bethesda, MD 20892
(Ex Officio member)

Amy E. Brin, MSN, MA, PCNS-BC (2025)
Executive Director/CEO
Child Neurology Foundation
Lexington, KY 40508

Robert H. Brown, Jr., M.D., D.Phil. (2025)
Director Program in Neurotherapeutics
University of Massachusetts Chan Medical
School
Worcester, MA 01655

Yishi Jin, Ph.D. (2026)
Distinguished Professor
Co-Director, The Kavli Institute of Brain and
Mind
Department of Neurobiology
School of Biological Sciences
University of California, San Diego
La Jolla, CA 92093

Jane Larkindale, D.Phil. (2026)
Vice President
PepGen Inc.
Cambridge, MA 02142

Jin-Moo Lee, M.D., Ph.D., FAHA (2026)
Andrew B. & Gretchen P. Jones Professor
Professor, Department of Radiology
Professor, Department of Biomedical
Engineering
Professor, Division of Biology and Biomedical
Sciences
Washington University School of Medicine
St. Louis, MO 63110

John H.R. Maunsell, Ph.D. (2025)
Albert D. Lasker Professor
Department of Neurobiology
University of Chicago
Chicago, IL 60637

Louise D. McCullough, M.D., Ph.D. (2025)
Professor and Chair, Neurology
McGovern Medical School
University of Texas Health Science Center at
Houston
Houston, TX 77030

Henry L. Paulson, M.D., Ph.D. (2026)
Lucile Groff Professor of Neurology
Department of Neurology
University of Michigan
Ann Arbor, MI 48109

Terms end July 31 of the designated year

Ex Officio

Jayanta Bhattacharya, Ph.D., M.D.
Director
National Institutes of Health
Bethesda, MD 20892

Stuart Hoffman, Ph.D.
Senior Health Science Officer
Office of Research and Development
Department of Veterans Affairs
Washington, DC 20003

Robert F. Kennedy, Jr., J.D.
Secretary
Department of Health and Human Services
Washington, DC 20201

Terry M. Rauch, Ph.D., M.P.H., M.B.A.
Director, Medical Research and Development
Office of the Assistant Secretary of Defense
(Health Affairs)
Department of Defense
Falls Church, VA 22042

Executive Secretary

Andrea Meredith, Ph.D.

Director, Division of Extramural Activities

National Institute of Neurological Disorders & Stroke

National Institutes of Health

Bethesda, MD 20892

National Advisory Neurological Disorders and Stroke (NANDS) Council
May 14-15, 2025, Meeting
Attachment

NINDS Employees present for portions of the meeting included:

Sidhat Abeywickrama	Chi Chang	Patrick Frost
Amy Adams	Denise Chatman	Lina Garcia
DeAnna Adkins	Thomas Cheever	Ana Garcia
Mariam Afzal	Bo-Shiun Chen	Hermon Gebrehwet
Lauren Ajayi-Obe	Daofen Chen	Robert Gereau
Heather Allison	Sophie Cho	Floy Gilchrist
Katrina Alston-Rodgers	Severn Churn	Annette Gilchrist
Sepideh Amin-Hanjani	Caren Collins	Marie Gill
Kimberly Andree	Carolyn Conlin	Ashley Givens
Ramachandran	Christopher Conrad	Jordan Gladman
Arudchandran	Devon Crawford	Fana Goitom
Cuevas Astacio	Cheryl Cudzilo	Gabriel Gonzales
Herson Astacio Cuevas	Michelle Cummings	Hector Gonzalez
Taryn Aubrecht	Adi Cymerblit-Sabba	Maureen Gormley
Hibah Awwad	Charles Cywin	Senthil Gounder
Debra Babcock	William Daley	Davis Graeme
Julia Bachman	Doctoroff Dan	Thomas Greenwell
Farah Bader	Karen David	Brooks Gross
Linda Bambrick	Alison Davis	Amelie Gubit
Karen Barnes	Michele Dean	Luis Guerra
Jennifer Barnes	Alexander Denker	Mai Habib
Jerome Battle	Vedangi Desai	Mohamed Hachicha
Vivian Bauman	Rekha Dhanwani	Kristina Hardy
Janna Belser-Ehrlich	Neel Dhruv	Adam Hartman
Monica Benjamin	Jeffrey Diamond	Seyed-Alireza Hassani
Richard Benson	Anthony Domenichiello	Ali Hassani
Jonathan Bernstein	Adele Doperalski	Brian Haugen
Charles Bird	Argenia Doss	Yejun He
Rose Bondoe	Anahid Ebrahimi	Janet He
Naomi Booker	Debbie Eng	Mary Hellmuth
Francesca Bosetti	Judy Fabrikant	Stuart Hoffman
Chris Boshoff	Alexandra Fang	Rebecca Hommer
Vanessa Boyce	Nicole Farhat	Mir Ahamed Hossain
Steven Britt	Cassandra Fields	Mariah Hoye
Robert Brown	Claudia Figueroa-Romero	Nina Hsu
Roger Campbell	Jessica Forbes	Eric Hudak
Kimberly Campbell Shields	Lucy Forrest	Grace Hwang
Emily Caporello	Megan Frankowski	Smriti Iyengar
Stacey Chambers	Lauren Friedman	Justin Jang

Lawrence Janis
Frances Jensen
David Jett
Li Jia
Kari Johnson
Kevin Jones
Gounder Karuppa
Senthilkumar Karuppa
Gounder Shanmugam
Aleksy Kazantsev
Cory Kelly
Noam Keren
Jenny Kim
Aaron Kinchen
Brian Klein
Jeffrey Kopsick
Kranthi Kotha
Svetlana Kotliarova
Doe Kumsa
Lauren Laboissonniere
Pascal Laeng
Christine Lam
Nicholas Langhals
Crystal Lee
Adriana Leenders
Biruk Lulseged
Quynh Ly
Timothy Lyden
Dina Lyon
Laura Mamounas
Gary Marlowe
Galia Heidi Matos
Heidi Matos Galicia
Sean McCarthy
Amber McCartney
Linda McGavern
Amy McGuire
Myriam-Dalila Megouache
Maria Mendoza-Puccini
Andrea Meredith
Mirela Milesco
Daniel Miller
Durga Mohapatra
Joseph Monaco

Diana Morales
Jill Morris
Stephanie Nagle Emmens
Yela Neely
John Ngai
Glen Nuckolls
Joan Ohayon
Ana Olariu
Oreisa Oneil
Oreisa O'Neil
Oreisa O'Neil-Mathurin
Leslie Osborne
Michael Oshinsky
Laxman Pandey
Marcy Pape
Rupen Parekh
Kathryn Partlow
Tatiana Pasternak
Ana Paz
Mary Pelleymounter
Sposito Peraza
Elio Peraza
Simon Peron
Annapurna Poduri
Pragya Prakash
Rebecca Price
Melinda Pruss
Michele Pucak
Chiranjeevi Puttaswamy
Shamsi Raeissi
Prithi Rajan
Shanta Rajaram
Srikanth Ranganathan
Ranga Rangarajan
Nagarajan Rangarajan
Yogendra Raol
Alva Recinos
Kavon Rezaizadeh
Matthew Rice
Manda Richards
Robert Riddle
Sarah Robinson Schwartz
Xing Rong
Rebecca Roof

Sara Sameni
Gina Sampson
Joshua Sanchez
Cheryse Sankar
Shireen Sarraf
Lumy Sawaki-Adams
Iqbal Sayeed
Alisa Schaefer
Paul Scott
Gretchen Scott
Nilkantha Sen
Surojeet Sengupta
Shalini Sharma
Smita Sharma
Kelly Sheppard
Frank Shewmaker
Arvind Shukla
Beth-Anne Sieber
Shai Silberberg
Tjerignimin Silue
Daniel Siok
Andrew Skinner
Kathleen Sluka
Shardell Spriggs
Sudha Srinivasan
Rukmareddy Sripathi
Natalia Strunnikova
Abhignya Subedi
Luis Sullivan
Tao Sun
Christine Swanson-Fischer
Zachary Sweet
Elizabeth Sypek
Thomas Taetzsch
Edmund Talley
Amir Tamiz
Laurent Taupenot
Carol Taylor-Burds
Gabriel Teran Baldizon
Pradeep Thapaliya
Shruthi Thomas
Natalie Trzcinski
Amy Tsou
Eric Tucker

William Tyler
Lauren Ullrich
George Umanah
Nsini Umoh
Ursula Utz
Claudio Villalobos Dintrans
Natalia Volfovsky
James Washington
Anne-Sophie Wattiez
Letitia Weigand
Rachel Weinberg
Matthew White
Vicky Whittemore
Shellie Wilburn
Sarah Woller
Ling Wong
Alynda Wood
Rick Woychik
Clinton Wright
Patrick Wright
Guangying Wu
Xiling Yin
Arlene Zheng