



AMERICAN INSTITUTE FOR MEDICAL  
AND BIOLOGICAL ENGINEERING

August 16, 2024

The Honorable Cathy McMorris Rodgers  
Chair, House Energy and Commerce Committee

Sent via email to: NIHReform@mail.house.gov

**Re: Reforming the National Institutes of Health: Framework for Discussion**

Dear Chairwoman McMorris Rodgers,

On behalf of the American Institute for Medical and Biological Engineering (AIMBE), I would like to express our appreciation for the opportunity to provide feedback on the Energy and Commerce Committee's Framework for Reforming the National Institutes of Health (NIH). AIMBE is a nonprofit honorific membership organization of over 2,000 of the most accomplished biomedical engineers. AIMBE is committed to advancing medical and biological engineering for the benefit of society. Since its founding in 1991, AIMBE has advocated for policies and initiatives that support ongoing advancement of and investment in medical and biological engineering.

We are grateful for Congress' enduring, bipartisan support of NIH and its dedication to funding basic, translational, and clinical research across numerous disciplines, including those central to the field of biomedical engineering. The sustained investment in NIH by Congress has been instrumental in fostering innovation and enabling groundbreaking advancements that have significantly improved healthcare outcomes.

AIMBE commends the initiative to reorganize the NIH with a strong emphasis on enhancing efficiency, fostering collaboration, and breaking down existing silos. We are particularly encouraged by your commitment to supporting innovation, which is essential for driving scientific discovery and translating research into impactful health solutions. However, AIMBE has significant concerns regarding the proposed reorganization of the NIH, particularly the consolidation of the National Institute of Biomedical Imaging and Bioengineering (NIBIB), the National Center for Advancing Translational Sciences (NCATS), the Common Fund, and ARPA-H into a single institute, along with a proposed \$973 million budget cut. Such a restructuring threatens to undermine the unique and vital role that NIBIB has played since its inception and threatens US healthcare innovation.

NIBIB was established in 2001 as the first NIH institute specifically focused on advancing engineering and technology for human health. Unlike disease- or physiological system-specific institutes, NIBIB's mission is agnostic regarding how the technologies it supports will be applied, making it a critical player in developing innovative solutions that benefit a wide array of medical fields. NIBIB's ability to forge its own identity and mission, while simultaneously collaborating with other NIH Institutes and federal agencies, has been pivotal in advancing biomedical engineering.



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Importantly, NIBIB-funded research has a substantial cross-institute impact, driving innovation and technology development across the NIH. The proposed restructuring would be a major disservice to research excellence in biomedical engineering, merging it with disparate entities that have different goals and greatly reducing the funding for this critical line of research.

NIBIB's existence has accelerated groundbreaking work in applying new technologies to healthcare. Biomedical engineering innovations driven by NIBIB funding, such as stent technology, at-home COVID-19 test kits, wearable physiological monitors, artificial organs, and many others, have been major contributors to healthcare advancements. The proposed streamlining would compromise these types of advances in the future by merging entities with vastly different scopes, functions, modes of operation, and national needs.

Moreover, the report rightly notes that biomedical research is an area of interest for adversarial countries. The US has been at the forefront of biomedical engineering advances, and undermining NIBIB's role could weaken our leadership in this critical field. The proposed restructuring would jeopardize our ability to maintain this leadership and continue producing innovations that improve global health outcomes.

AIMBE Fellows represent the top biomedical engineering researchers across academia, industry, and government, and they are a valuable resource who stand ready to contribute to these important discussions. We would welcome the opportunity to work collaboratively to share further input as you develop a reorganization plan for NIH that best serves the interests of our country and the scientific enterprise. We strongly urge a reconsideration of the proposed consolidation and budget reduction of NIBIB, ensuring that biomedical engineering remains a cornerstone of NIH's mission.

We sincerely thank you for your leadership and your commitment to modernizing the NIH. Should you have any questions or require further input from AIMBE, please do not hesitate to contact us.

Sincerely,

*Dawn Beraud*

Dawn Beraud, Ph.D.  
Executive Director