RE: Request for Information (RFI): Inviting Comments and Suggestions on Updating the NIH Mission Statement
NOT-OD-23-163

September 30, 2023

To whom it may concern:

The Multi-Regional Clinical Trials Center of Brigham and Women’s Hospital and Harvard (MRCT Center) appreciates the opportunity to comment on the National Institutes of Health’s request for input on the proposed changes to the NIH Mission Statement. It is timely and important, and we appreciate the invitation to comment.

The MRCT Center is a research and policy center that addresses the ethics, conduct, oversight, and regulatory environment of international, multi-site clinical trials. Founded in 2009, it functions as an independent convener to engage diverse stakeholders from industry, academia, patients and patient advocacy groups, nonprofit organizations, and global regulatory agencies. The responsibility for the content of this document rests with the leadership of the MRCT Center, not with its collaborators nor with the institutions with which its authors are affiliated.*

First, we wish to commend the NIH for recognizing people with disabilities as a population with health disparities. This designation will help to ensure that people with disabilities are included in research. We also commend the NIH for launching a dedicated research program to understand the barriers, unmet needs, and necessary interventions required to address the health disparities experienced by people with disabilities.

Second, we fully endorse the proposed changes to the NIH mission statement. The current NIH mission statement speaks to “reduce illness and disability,” a statement that is ableist and discriminatory. The proposed mission statement aligns with the vision and purpose of the agency. It could not be more welcome.

Thank you again for the opportunity to comment. Please feel free to contact the MRCT Center (bbierer@bwh.harvard.edu, sawhite@bwh.harvard.edu, or mark.barnes@ropesgray.com) if we can be helpful or if you wish to discuss.

Respectfully submitted,

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