

May 20, 2022

Lawrence A. Tabak, DDS, PhD
Acting Director
National Institutes of Health

Dear Dr. Tabak:

On behalf of the Association for Psychological Science (APS), I commend the National Institutes of Health (NIH) for the report of the NIH Council of Councils Working Group on the Integration of Behavioral and Social Sciences Research at NIH. This document is a clarion call for NIH to increase its support for behavioral and social sciences research.

This report recognizes the central importance of the behavioral and social sciences to achieving NIH's mission. The catastrophic rates of death and illness associated with the COVID-19 pandemic and the persistent resistance to public health interventions by a significant percentage of society are clear evidence of the need to increase investments in behavioral and social sciences. Moreover, NIH must ensure that its staffing, grant review protocols, and other organizational structures and functions include behavioral scientists.

Of special concern to APS is the report's recognition that there are many gaps and much variability in the degree to which NIH institutes and centers integrate and support behavioral and social sciences research. These fields are absent from many institutes' strategic plans; they are not represented on advisory committees; they are under-resourced within institutes and centers and by the limited size of NIH's Office of Behavioral and Social Sciences Research. These findings mean that NIH is neither generating the full scope of knowledge of living systems nor fully applying that knowledge to enhance health, lengthen life, or reduce disease.

APS and our members—who represent the breadth of the psychological sciences and have the expertise identified by the report—stand ready to work with NIH as it develops plans and strategies to implement the report's recommendations.

Thank you for your ongoing leadership and for your attention to this topic.

Sincerely,



Robert Gropp, PhD
Chief Executive Officer/Executive Director