

# How Does NIH Protect Its Investment?

From a presentation made at the IC  
Directors retreat by Drs. Berg and Landis

# The Situation

- During the doubling
  - Investigator pool grew substantially
  - Institutional expectations on individual investigators increased
- Post-doubling
  - Success rates fell due to flat budgets and increased application numbers
  - Highly rated A1 and A2 applications accumulated in the system
  - Scientific community became discouraged and frustrated

# Pathway to Independence

- Created to enable more rapid transition from postdoc to funded independent research
  - Decrease age of independence (R funding)
  - Increase likelihood of job openings
  - Improve morale among postdocs
- Version 1.0
  - <5 years of postdoctoral research experience
  - 1-2 years of K99 fellowship training (up to 90K/award including 50K max for stipend and 8% F&A)
  - 3 years of R00 contingent upon securing an independent research position and administrative review (total cost \$249,000/award including full F&A)
  - US citizens and non-citizens are eligible to apply

# Pathway to Independence

- 2007 target is 170 awards
- 1000+ applications
- 80 extramural awards made to date
  - 35% to CA, 14% to MA
  - 42% to women
  - 90% to PhDs; 10% to MDs or MD/PhDs
- Version 1.5
  - Increased stipend to K08/K23 level for MDs
  - Changed language to clarify eligibility
- Submission rate stabilizing at 300-325/round

# NIH Director's New Innovator Award

- Designed to encourage highly innovative new investigators
- 300K direct/year for 5 years
- Awardees must have a faculty position but no R01
- 10 page applications due by May 22
- 2000+ applications expected
- 14 or more awards anticipated
- 5-year awards fully funded within FY2007 dollars

# Strategies for Funding New Investigators before FY2007

- Some IC's established a new PI R01 grants 3-5 percentile points above normal payline
- Others gave high program priority to new PI
- No imposed reductions in duration and amount of awards beyond that recommended by review
- Policies were reasonably effective

# Strategies for Funding New Investigators in 2007

- Goal is to fund as many R01s from new investigators in 2007 as were funded on average for the past 5 years
- 576/1525 (40%) grants awarded to date
- 42% A1s, 36% A2s (Only 22% unamended)
- 84% with scores 0-15th percentile
- Expect that substantial reaches (>15 %ile points above nominal payline) may be required to reach targets in some IC's

# NIH Director's Bridge Award

- Phase 1: Established investigators whose only significant support is competing and within 10 points of IC payline (<200K total)
- Phase 2: Other support level <400K total and up to the 25th percentile
- No A2's
- 91 million available in 07 budget
- 317 grants were nominated for 117 million

# Questions?

- Are we reaching too far for new investigators?
  - Disadvantaging vulnerable established investigators
  - How will these new investigators compete in the future?
- Should other programs be developed for other vulnerable investigators (e.g. first competitive renewal)?
- Are there steps earlier in the pipeline that should be considered?
- Other issues?