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## Nominations being accepted for The Translational Science 2015 Joint Awards Program and Trainee Travel Awards



In the sixth year of the Translational Science meeting, the sponsoring and partnering organizations of ACTS and AFMR will acknowledge the outstanding contributions of investigators and educators in the field. The recipient of each award will be recognized during Translational Science 2015, April 16-18, 2015 in Washington, DC and be given five minutes to make a presentation.

Also, members are invited to nominate one trainee for the Burroughs-Wellcome Fund Trainee Travel Award to attend the Translational Science 2015 Meeting. This includes complimentary registration to the meeting and up to \$600 to defray travel costs. Trainees will benefit with special sessions designed for trainees such as "Meetings with Program Officers," poster sessions, and networking opportunities.

All awards nominations are due by **February 13, 2015**.

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## Translational Science 2015 Abstract Submission Deadline Extended to January 26!

Need a little more time to prepare your Translational Science 2015 abstract? You're in luck! The deadline to submit an abstract has been extended to Monday, January 26! This is your final opportunity to share your work and find new opportunities for collaboration with your colleagues – don't miss out! Submit your abstract by 11:59 pm Pacific Standard Time for consideration.

Presentations are being accepted for the following categories:

- Pre-Doctoral Trainee (TL1 Scholar)

*January 2015*

### In This Issue

[News from ACTS](#)

[Translational Science News](#)

[Grant Opportunities](#)

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### About ACTS

The ACTS mission is to advance research and education in clinical and translational science to improve human health. For more information, visit [actscience.org](http://actscience.org)

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- Pre-Doctoral Trainee (T32, F32, Foundation, Intramural or other)
- Post-Doctoral Trainee (T32, F32, Foundation, IDEA, Intramural awards)
- KL2 or IDEA Funded Scholar
- K-Funded Scholar
- Mid-Career and Senior Scientists
- Education/Career Development

Be part of this gathering of the brightest minds in the field of translational science. Submit your abstract today!

Don't forget to register soon to take advantage of the early bird rate.

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## Check out the exciting sessions we have lined up for you at TS15!

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The ACTS TS15 Program Committee has lined up a robust program for this year's annual meeting. Researchers of all levels of experience should find something of interest for them. Whether it's an educational session or to hear just one of our enlightening plenary speakers, you can't miss this year's meeting.

See the schedule here.

Session descriptions coming soon!

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## Call for Nominees: 2015 Associate Scientific Advisorships for Early-career Translational Scientists with Science Translational Medicine

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Science/AAAS's sister journal Science Translational Medicine and our Chief Scientific Advisors Dr. Elazer R. Edelman and Dr. Garret A. FitzGerald invite Principal Investigators and Mentors to nominate outstanding early-career translational scientists and policy scholars to serve as Associate Scientific Advisors for the journal. With this program Science Translational Medicine seeks to build connections with the community of early-career scientists in translational medicine and to provide them with training in scientific communication and critical analysis of the literature. Selected nominees will serve as Associate Scientific Advisors for the journal for a period of 1 year.

For more information, click [here](#).

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## ACTS Director Named Dean of Rutgers University School of Public Health

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ACTS Board of Directors member, Dr. Jasjit S. Ahluwalia, was recently named Dean of the Rutgers University School of Public Health by Rutgers Chancellor Dr. Brian Strom.

Dr. Ahluwalia is a long time member of the ACTS and was named to the ACTS Board of Directors in 2013. Please join us in congratulating Dr. Ahluwalia on his new accomplishment!

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## News from ACTS

---

From the Hill--ACTS Advocacy Committee is making an impact on your behalf  
Becoming an advocate is easy!

Coming in February 2015--Two Editions of ACTS Connection  
Share your exciting stories...Membership News!

## Translational Science News

---

Exceptional Opportunities in Medical Science: a View From the National Institutes of Health

NIH Proposes Cloud Commons for Biomedical Research

Sharing Clinical Trial Data: Maximizing Benefits, Minimizing Risk

Biobanking on Translational Omics

J&J Becomes First Devicemaker to Broadly Share Trial Data

The Anatomy of Medical Research: US and International Comparisons

Small Biotech Gets Rights to Rare Disease Drug

Survey Highlights Challenges to Reproducible Science for Translational Researchers

## Grant Opportunities

---

Predictive Multiscale Models for Biomedical, Biological, Behavioral, Environmental and Clinical Research (U01)

W.M Keck Foundation Research Program Grant

Leukemia & Lymphoma Society Translational Research Program

The V Foundation Announces Stuart Scott Memorial Cancer Research Fund

Novel Assays to Address Translational Gaps in Treatment Development (UH2/UH3)

NIDCR Dentist Scientist Career Transition Award for Intramural Investigators (K22)

NIA Academic Leadership Career Award (K07)

NIH Pathway to Independence Award (Parent K99/R00)

## News from ACTS

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### From the Hill--ACTS Advocacy Committee is making an impact on your behalf

When Congress completed work and adjourned for the year at the end of 2014, they left the clinical and translational research community with reasons to be grateful. Once again, legislators demonstrated support for key federal programs and training and career development activities. Most notably, the FY 2015 Omnibus Appropriations package included:

- A \$150 million funding increase for the National Institutes of Health (NIH) to bring NIH's total funding up to \$30.1 billion.
- "At least" \$475 million for the Clinical and Translational Science Awards (CTSA) Program.
- \$273 million for the Institutional Development Awards (IDeA) Program.
- While essentially level-funding was provided for the Agency for Healthcare Research and Quality (AHRQ, for the first-time AHRQ was funded with more stable discretionary resources.

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### Becoming an advocate is easy!

Congress continues to prioritize clinical and translational research and training activities due to the effective outreach of community advocates. As 2015 begins, many new legislators will be tackling difficult issues, such as funding levels for key programs and once again addressing sequestration. Please join the community's successful advocacy efforts, educate your legislators about the value and importance of clinical and translational research (especially if you are from an IDeA state), and ask for their support on funding and other issues. Becoming an advocate is easy:

- Join our monthly advocacy committee calls.
- Attend Capitol Hill Advocacy Day during Translational Science 2014.
- Sign up to receive alerts and advocacy updates.

For additional information on advocacy or to become an advocate, please contact Dane Christansen .

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### Coming in February 2015--Two Editions of ACTS Connection

Coming in February 2015, the ACTS Connection newsletter will move to a twice-monthly submission cycle. You will receive TS15 meeting information, News from the Hill, Translational Science News, grant opportunities, and cutting-edge research stories from membership.

Look for it on the second and fourth Thursday of each month!

If you missed a month, check out previous newsletters [here](#).

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### Share your exciting stories...Membership News!

Does your institution have news you want to share with the *ACTS Connection* readership? Do you have an investigator doing something innovative? Let us know! From innovative projects, star scholars and trainees, to award winning faculty, help us share the news that is important to you by submitting it through our [online form](#).

Your news may be shared on the ACTS website, and other ACTS social media sources!

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## Translational Science News

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### Exceptional Opportunities in Medical Science: a View From the National Institutes of Health

Scientific advances are enabling the emergence of personalized medicine, an approach that can help identify appropriate therapeutics for various biological pathways as well as develop new drugs, writes Francis S. Collins, director of the National Institutes of Health (NIH). For instance, the U.S. government's \$3.8 billion initial investment in the Human Genome Project has resulted in nearly \$1 trillion in economic growth, reflecting a 178-fold return on investment. Collins notes that NIH has made a major investment in a new initiative called BRAIN (Brain Research through Advancing Innovative Neurotechnologies), a multiagency research venture intended to develop new tools for evaluating nerve cells, networks, and pathways in real time. The initiative is expected to form a foundational platform to achieve advances in such disorders as Alzheimer disease, Parkinson disease, autism, schizophrenia, epilepsy, and traumatic brain injury. NIH also supports combining innovative stem cell research with new methods of generating targeted mutations in mammalian cells at high efficiency, such as the CRISPR-cas9 genome editing systems. Furthermore, the NIH is exploring new strategies for vaccine development based on identifying antigenic regions of viruses that are invariant between different isolates, which can also apply to human immunodeficiency virus and AIDS. "The NIH is committed to leading the way in this time of exceptional opportunities in medical science, and in translating new discoveries to improve the health of the nation and the world," Collins concludes.

From "Exceptional Opportunities in Medical Science: a View From the National Institutes of Health"

*Journal of the American Medical Association (01/13/15) Vol. 313, No. 2, P. 131*  
Collins, Francis S.

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### NIH Proposes Cloud Commons for Biomedical Research

The National Institutes of Health (NIH) is proposing an electronic "Commons" to serve as a shared computing resource and repository for biomedical data and informatics tools. Using an application programming interface-based approach, the Commons would extract a unified set from across multiple data sources. NIH hopes to develop an implementation plan for the Commons that would create a "federation of conformant clouds [comprised of] public providers, companies that utilize public providers, or high-performance computing centers at academic institutions or national laboratories," according to its sources-sought notice. NIH would also distribute credits to the

Commons throughout the biomedical community by means of a third-party reseller. These credits could be redeemed using the individual's cloud resource provider. NIH reports that grants could pay for additional credits. "This model matches supply to demand and provides resources where needed (with individual investigators) and provides for a robust market where vendors compete to provide the best services to the research community at the lowest possible price," NIH said in the notice. NIH is still searching for a third-party reseller to oversee the Commons' credit and payment systems as well as organizations that can provide necessary cloud services.

From "NIH Proposes Cloud Commons for Biomedical Research"  
*HPC Wire (01/12/15) Lang, Chelsea*

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### **Sharing Clinical Trial Data: Maximizing Benefits, Minimizing Risk**

The Institute of Medicine has released a report that recommends government agencies and companies share data from research studies that they fund. The report sets out several steps that clinical trial sponsors are encouraged to take in order to widen access. These include developing specific plans for sharing data, such as granting access through third-party web sites; and adopting recommended timetables for releasing both summary and complete data packages after studies have been finished and published. The report suggests that summary level results should be publicly available no later than one year after a trial has been completed. Also, a complete data package, which includes the full protocol and statistical analysis plan, among other things, should be shared no later than 18 months after a study is completed.

From "Sharing Clinical Trial Data: Maximizing Benefits, Minimizing Risk"  
*Institute of Medicine (01/14/2015)*

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### **Biobanking on Translational Omics**

Next-generation biobanks are crucial for achieving personalized medicine because they gather, monitor, and maintain various biological specimens required for research. The Prostate, Lung, Colorectal, and Ovarian Cancer Screening Trial Biorepository, for instance, currently contains nearly 3 million specimens, says Claire Zhu at the National Cancer Institute. Allison Hubel at the University of Minnesota says biobank staff need to "employ the same best practices that pharma utilizes for documentation and monitoring" to avoid common mistakes. Resources available to biobanks include the International Society for Biological and Environmental Repositories and the BioCoR library, which Huber says has information on such things as freezing whole cord blood and using a mechanical freezer versus liquid nitrogen. University of Montreal's Philip Awadalla directs Canada's CARTaGENE biobank, which has more than 40,000 participants from Quebec. He says the biobank is part of the Canadian-wide Partnership for Tomorrow Program, which has collected data from more than 300,000 participants and supports other comprehensive recontact studies such as MRI phenotyping. Awadalla and colleagues performed a high-resolution genomic analysis of human mitochondrial RNA sequence variation and discovered that mutations in the genome of mitochondria are associated with a number of biological processes and some diseases. Michael H.A. Roehrl at the University of Toronto believes that in order for biobanking to succeed, it must use technology to know the exact details of how and what is collected, ensure consistent specimen quality, and implement an omics-driven approach.

From "Biobanking on Translational Omics"  
*Genetic Engineering & Biotechnology News (01/15/15) Liszewski, Kathy*

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### **J&J Becomes First Devicemaker to Broadly Share Trial Data**

Johnson & Johnson will start sharing clinical trial data for its devices and diagnostics with the Yale University Open Data Access (YODA) Project. The company already shares clinical trial data via the project for its pharmaceutical products. The YODA Project was launched in 2011 to serve as a third-party independent reviewer of requests from investigators and physicians seeking to access clinical trial data. "Through sharing of clinical trial data for medical devices, we can now learn more about these important medical treatments," said Joseph Ross, associate professor of medicine and member of the YODA Project. Yale cardiologist Harlan Krumholz observes



that medical devices "are playing a growing role in medical care and it is increasingly important that we have a thorough understanding of the evidence that does exist." Meanwhile, the European Medicines Agency implemented a new policy on Jan. 1 that calls for publishing clinical data submitted as part of marketing applications for drugs. GlaxoSmithKline launched a similar effort that allows researchers to request patient data collected in clinical trials for its products, and 10 other drug manufacturers are similarly providing access to the Web site.

From "J&J Becomes First Devicemaker to Broadly Share Trial Data"  
*Modern Healthcare (01/14/15) Lee, Jaimy*

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### **The Anatomy of Medical Research: US and International Comparisons**

A new study comparing trends in U.S. and international research funding, productivity, and disease burden indicates that U.S. investment in medical research has slowed over the past decade. The rate of growth in the United States dropped to 0.8 percent annually from 2004 to 2012, compared to the 6 percent annual growth seen between 1994 and 2004. The researchers note that private sources accounted for 58 percent of funding in 2012, up from 46 percent in 1994. In addition, there was less early-stage research in favor of medical devices, bioengineered drugs, and late-stage clinical trials. Of the global total for funding, U.S. government research funding dropped to 50 percent in 2012 from 57 percent in 2004. The total U.S. share of global research funding (including public and private funding) decreased from 57 percent to 44 percent. According to the authors, the findings highlight "the need for the United States to find new sources to support medical research, if the clinical value of its past science investment and opportunities to improve care are to be fully realized."

From "The Anatomy of Medical Research: US and International Comparisons"  
*Journal of the American Medical Association (01/13/15) Vol. 313, No. 2, P. 174 Moses, Hamilton; Matheson, David H.M.; Cairns-Smith, Sarah; et al.*

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### **Small Biotech Gets Rights to Rare Disease Drug**

Vtesse Inc. has licensed rights to cyclodextrin from the National Institutes of Health (NIH) in an effort to develop the drug for treating Niemann-Pick Type C (NPC) disease, a fatal cholesterol metabolism disorder. The deal marks one of the first commercial initiatives stemming from a program to develop drugs for rare and neglected diseases at the NIH's National Center for Advancing Translational Sciences (NCATS). Janssen Research & Development, a unit of Johnson & Johnson that makes cyclodextrin, will continue to supply the drug at no cost to Vtesse for research and to families that have received FDA permission to use the drug under a doctor's supervision. Vtesse says it has raised \$25 million from investors, including Pfizer Venture Investments, to support the NIH-led cyclodextrin trial and will work with NIH researchers to launch a second, larger trial later in 2015. The second trial will likely enroll 50 to 75 patients in the United States and Europe, and will test whether cyclodextrin is effective in treating NPC and would be used to seek regulatory approval, says Ben Machielse, president and chief executive officer of Vtesse. Vtesse will meet with U.S. and European regulators to discuss the scope of the next trial, and will request feedback from families, patient advocates, academic researchers, and others as it moves forward with developing the drug. As part of the agreement, Vtesse is also funding studies to develop several forms of delta-tocopherol to potentially treat NPC disease in addition to other lysosomal storage disorders. "The primary outcome here is very unusual for most NIH projects because it is not a paper or a publication, it is a license," observes NCATS Director Christopher P. Austin.

From "Small Biotech Gets Rights to Rare Disease Drug"  
*Wall Street Journal (01/07/15) Marcus, Amy Dockser*

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### **Survey Highlights Challenges to Reproducible Science for Translational Researchers**

A new report by the Sigma-Aldrich Corp. looks at challenges to the reproducibility of research within the academic translational research community. Based on a survey conducted in conjunction with the Association for the Advancement of Science and the Academic Drug Discovery Consortium (ADDC), the report found that just 22 percent of

respondents had complete success in the last year reproducing other labs' published work. Key obstacles cited by respondents include poor controls, the rush to publish, and insufficient samples sizes. Half of the respondents blamed the reproducing lab's failure to understand or follow experimental protocols. The survey results also suggest that several simple quality control practices could be performed more consistently, such as testing for mycoplasma, validating reagents for purity and identity, and screening for misidentified cell lines. "We need to have more of those difficult, but important, conversations about restructuring the research enterprise at all levels, from the research conduct of an individual scientist to the edicts, funding, and grant requirements from the NIH and other organizations worldwide. Then we must actually put in place the necessary resources to accommodate reform," says Barbara Slusher, co-founder and president of ADDC.

From "Survey Highlights Challenges to Reproducible Science for Translational Researchers"

*Lab Product News (01/05/15)*

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## Grant Opportunities

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### **Predictive Multiscale Models for Biomedical, Biological, Behavioral, Environmental and Clinical Research (U01)**

An interagency funding opportunity announcement (FOA) seeks to support the development of multiscale models to accelerate biological, biomedical, behavioral, environmental, and clinical research. Agencies involved with this FOA include the National Institutes of Health, the U.S. Army Research Office, the Department of Energy, the Food and Drug Administration, the National Aeronautics and Space Administration, the National Science Foundation, and the Office of Naval Research. The agencies note that "to efficiently and effectively address the challenges of understanding multiscale biological and behavioral systems, researchers will need predictive, computational models that encompass multiple biological and behavioral scales." The FOA is aimed at the development of non-standard modeling methods and experimental approaches to facilitate multiscale modeling, and active participation in community-driven activities through the Multiscale Modeling Consortium. Projects are limited to more than \$500,000 in direct costs annually, with the maximum award project five years. Applications for the next cycle are due by March 9, 2015.

From "Predictive Multiscale Models for Biomedical, Biological, Behavioral, Environmental and Clinical Research (U01)"

*NIH Grants (01/15/15)*

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### **W.M Keck Foundation Research Program Grant**

The W.M. Keck Foundation is offering research program grants for research projects that are distinctive in their approach and have the potential to be transformative across multiple fields. Eligible institutions include research universities, medical colleges, and major private independent scientific and medical research institutes. Previous grants have ranged from \$500,000 to \$5 million, though they are typically \$2 million or less. Applicants are encouraged to participate in the pre-application counseling period, which takes place between Jan. 1 and Feb. 15. Applications for the next cycle of funding are due by May 1.

From "W.M Keck Foundation Research Program Grant"

*W.M. Keck Foundation (01/15/15)*

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### **Leukemia & Lymphoma Society Translational Research Program**

The Leukemia & Lymphoma Society is offering funding for new and innovative research that shows high potential for translating basic biomedical knowledge to clinical application for leukemia, lymphoma, and myeloma. The Translational Research Program, developed to encourage and provide early-stage support for clinical research in the field, offers awards of up to \$200,000 per year for three years. Letters of intent are due by Feb. 17, 2015, with full applications due by March 2, 2015.

From "Leukemia & Lymphoma Society Translational Research Program"  
*Leukemia & Lymphoma Society (01/15/15)*

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### **The V Foundation Announces Stuart Scott Memorial Cancer Research Fund**

The V Foundation for Cancer Research has announced a new cancer research fund in honor of Stuart Scott. The longtime ESPN anchor recently passed away after a long battle with cancer. The fund, according to the foundation, will "assist some of the most vulnerable and disproportionately impacted communities battling this horrible disease." The foundation will initially fund V Scholar Grants and Translational Research Grants, focusing on "scholars and research dedicated to the untimely death, aggressiveness, therapeutic responsiveness and ultimate outcomes experienced by cancer patients from different ethnic populations." The V Scholar Grants, aimed at "rising star" young investigators, will provide \$200,000 over a two-year period. The Translational Grants, meanwhile, will provide \$600,000 over three years.

From "The V Foundation Announces Stuart Scott Memorial Cancer Research Fund"  
*The V Foundation for Cancer Research (01/12/15)*

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### **Novel Assays to Address Translational Gaps in Treatment Development (UH2/UH3)**

The National Institute of Mental Health (NIMH) has issued a funding opportunity announcement (FOA) to develop novel assays to address translational gaps in treatment development. According to NIMH, the ultimate goal of this FOA "is to improve the efficiency of the therapeutic development process by addressing inconsistencies between the preclinical screening pipeline and clinical evaluation of new treatment candidates and thereby hasten the development of more effective treatments for mental disorders." Specifically, support will be made for efforts that emphasize quantitative measures to assess neurophysiology/circuit activity that underlie or reflect domains of function that could serve as possible treatment targets. NIMH plans to provide \$1.5 million in fiscal year 2016 to fund 3-4 awards. Applications are due by April 3, 2015.

From "Novel Assays to Address Translational Gaps in Treatment Development (UH2/UH3)"  
*NIH Grants (01/12/15)*

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### **NIDCR Dentist Scientist Career Transition Award for Intramural Investigators (K22)**

The National Institute of Dental and Craniofacial Research (NIDCR) is offering funding through the NIDCR Dentist Scientist Career Transition Award for Intramural Investigators (K22) program. The program offers highly qualified dentists in NIH Intramural postdoctoral fellowship positions the opportunity to receive additional mentored research experience in the NIH Intramural program. In addition, it provides them with independent funding to help facilitate the transition of their research programs as new investigators at extramural institutions. Applications for the next cycle are due by March 12, 2015.

From "NIDCR Dentist Scientist Career Transition Award for Intramural Investigators (K22)"  
*NIH Grants (01/08/15)*

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### **NIA Academic Leadership Career Award (K07)**

The National Institute on Aging (NIA) is offering funding through the NIA Research Leadership Career Award. The award aims to provide support for more senior investigators who have the necessary expertise and leadership skills to enhance the aging and geriatric research capacity at their academic institution. Specifically, the award provides support for infrastructure, mentorship, and career development activities in support of new or emerging areas that are of academic interest to the NIA. Applications for the next cycle are due by June 12, 2015.



From "NIA Academic Leadership Career Award (K07)"  
*NIH Grants (01/08/15)*

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### **NIH Pathway to Independence Award (Parent K99/R00)**

The National Institutes of Health has announced the NIH Pathway to Independence Award program. The aim of the program is "to increase and maintain a strong cohort of new and talented, NIH-supported, independent investigators." The program seeks to facilitate a timely transition of outstanding postdoctoral researchers from mentored, postdoctoral research positions to independent, tenure-track or equivalent faculty positions. In addition, it will provide independent NIH research support during the transition that will help the recipients launch competitive, independent research careers. Applications are due by March 12, 2015.

From "NIH Pathway to Independence Award (Parent K99/R00)"  
*NIH Grants (01/08/15)*

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