

DANIEL K. INOUE  
HAWAII

APPROPRIATIONS  
Subcommittee on Defense—Chairman

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CHAIRMAN

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## United States Senate

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December 11, 2008

**Raynard Kington, MD, PhD  
Acting Director  
National Institutes of Health  
1 Center Drive, MSC 0148  
Bethesda, Maryland 20892**

**Dear Dr. Kington:**

**Congratulations on your appointment as Acting Director of the National Institutes of Health. Your service as NIH Deputy Director and Director of the Office of Behavioral and Social Science Research (OBSSR) prepares you well to provide continued strong leadership and stewardship of the nation's premiere health research agency. In fact, it is your past role at OBSSR that makes me think that you may be the right person-- and that now may be the right time -- to address a longstanding NIH issue: the need for scientific leadership at NIH for basic behavioral research.**

**As you know, this is a matter that has remained unresolved for many years, despite persistent urging by the Appropriations Committee. And I have been its strongest supporter in the Senate. I will not go through the entire history, but you should know that the Senate Labor, Health and Human Services Appropriations Committee fiscal year 2008 report included language I requested that stated as follows:**

**"...the Committee is concerned by the continued lack of focus of scientific leadership at NIH for this important field of science. It is therefore requested that the Director submit a report to the Committee by December 1, 2007 indicating the scientific leadership structure for this field within the appropriate grant making institute" (page 156, Senate Report 110-107).**

**NIH responded in April, 2008 with a report titled "Scientific Leadership Structure for Basic Behavioral Research" which reported that 12 of the Institutes fund basic behavioral research totaling approximately \$1 billion annually. While I understand that many in the field dispute the accuracy of these numbers, the NIH report seems**

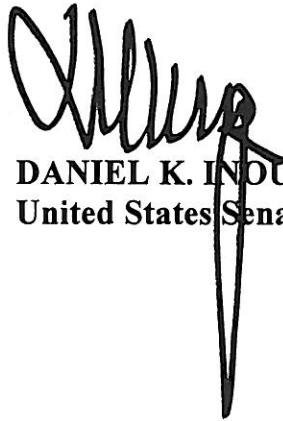
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to strengthen the rationale of the Committee's repeated recommendations to NIH that scientific leadership be provided for this important area of research at a grant-making Institute.

Once again I was disappointed that the NIH report only provided a description of the status quo, and failed to address the central question of a new home for basic behavioral science research and the scientific leadership for this field at the appropriate grant-making NIH institute. Most agree this institute should be the National Institute of General Medical Sciences (NIGMS), which has a legislative mandate that would readily accommodate such a new function. As this effort would help integrate the important role of behavioral research into improving health outcomes for the significant majority of all disease states, the recommendations of the Congress in this matter have too long been ignored and need to be implemented in a timely manner.

I look forward to supporting your tenure at NIH and to your assistance in resolving this matter.

Aloha,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Dan Inouye', written over the printed name and title.

DANIEL K. INOUE  
United States Senator

DKI:gjw