

New NIH “Transformative Research” Program Focuses on Behavior

November 01, 2008

The National Institutes of Health (NIH) has just given a big boost for behavioral science funding: A new Transformative R01 Program (T-R01) will support exceptionally innovative, original, or unconventional research that encourages researchers to seize unexpected opportunities and cultivate bold ideas regardless of the anticipated risk. The program, supported by the NIH Common Fund — which pools funds from all NIH institutes — aims to transform current paradigms by supporting inventive research.

Through an NIH strategic planning process, behavioral science was emphasized as an area of need for the T-R01 program. As a result, “Understanding and Facilitating Human Behavior Change” is one of the priorities this program will fund. Critical to the prevention, management, and treatment of many diseases, behavior change is a poorly understood phenomenon. We know that certain behavior-based interventions work, but we don’t always know why they work or what distinguishes them from those that are unsuccessful. NIH wants research that gets at the basic mechanisms of behavior change at the biological, behavioral, and social levels, and it wants to stimulate the development of innovative approaches to interventions.

Up to 60 projects could be funded for a total of \$25 million in Fiscal Year 2009, and the projected budget over the next five years is \$250 million. Applications are now being accepted; letters of intent are due December 29, 2008, and applications are due January 29, 2009. See RFA-RM-08-029 on NIH’s website, or go to www.nihroadmap.nih.gov. ?