

October 17, 2005

Elias Zerhouni, M.D.  
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National Institutes of Health  
One Center Drive  
Suite 126 – MSC 0148  
Bethesda, MD 20892

Dear Dr. Zerhouni:

The undersigned nonprofit medical and scientific societies that publish journals are long-time supporters of NIH and have worked closely with NIH to see that important research findings are published and disseminated to the public through independent peer review, careful editing, printing and web hosting. In an effort to continue this collaborative relationship, we ask for your consideration of a proposal supported by our organizations. We believe will achieve NIH's goals of enhancing public access to publications reporting on NIH funded research while preserving the important role of scientific journals in peer review and maintaining the integrity of the scientific record.

We seek your participation in a public-private partnership taking advantage of the fact that most nonprofit publishers make the contents of their journals freely available to the public within 12 months of publication. We propose that NIH provide public access through its existing system of links from the abstracts that are indexed in the Medline/PubMed database rather than hosting author manuscripts on the PubMed Central website. By linking to journal websites NIH can provide access to more than a million articles that are available without cost to the government or to the reader.

A summary of our proposal is attached to this letter. The steering group for our organizations would like to meet with you to further discuss the benefits of this proposal and how our organizations can work with you to maximize the public's access to research publications. Dr. Laura Brockway of FASEB will be in contact with your office to see if such a meeting can be arranged. Please contact her at 301-634-7650 if you have any additional questions.

## **The National Institutes of Health (NIH) “Policy on Enhancing Public Access to Archived Publications Resulting from NIH Funded Research”: Not-For-Profit Scientific Publishers’ Proposal for Improving Compliance and Achieving NIH Goals**

### **Background and Challenge**

On May 2, 2005, the National Institutes of Health (NIH) began to implement its new “Policy on Enhancing Public Access to Archived Publications Resulting from NIH Funded Research.” This policy requests that NIH grantees submit to NIH PubMed Central (PMC) manuscripts reporting on NIH-funded research after they have been peer reviewed and accepted for publication in scientific journals. At the time of submission, grantees are asked to designate a public release date that is 12 months or less after publication.

To implement this policy, NIH has communicated with NIH-funded scientists to explain the goals of the new policy (to enhance public access to scientific research and to better manage the NIH portfolio) as well as the manuscript submission process. However, NIH estimates that only 3% of available unpublished manuscripts have been uploaded to PMC.

### **Not-for-profit publishers’ solution**

The undersigned organizations and not-for-profit journals offer the following proposal as a means of helping NIH achieve its goals while also addressing our community’s two major concerns about the policy. These concerns are:

1. Ensuring the integrity of the scientific literature by publicly disseminating only the final, published article, rather than the author’s unedited manuscript, and
2. Preserving the critically important role of scientific journals which peer review, edit, and publish articles resulting from NIH-funded research, providing independent validation of both the research results and the use of federal tax dollars to support scientific research.

The undersigned organizations and journals propose a public-private partnership with NIH that would take advantage of the fact that most not-for-profit publishers already make **all** their research articles - not just NIH supported ones - available for free to the public 12 months or less after publication. Instead of NIH/PMC undertaking a whole new publishing venture that involves formatting and publishing unfinished manuscripts of NIH-funded authors, NIH should use existing links from NIH’s highly respected PubMed (a venerable search engine of scientific literature) to our journals’ websites. Using these links, readers can access the final, published articles already residing on our journals’ websites. Linking is seamless; the reader would simply click on the desired link and would be transferred automatically to the journal’s website. If NIH so desires, these journals could identify for readers the articles that result from NIH-funded research.

To address NIH’s desire to create an internal archive of manuscripts reporting NIH-funded research, journals would provide to NIH immediate access to journal content for internal use.

### **This proposal has the following advantages**

1. NIH would, through existing links to journals, be able to help the public access millions of articles that are posted on private journal websites. Many not-for-profit publishers post their journals online through HighWire Press, a division of Stanford University Libraries. HighWire Press is the largest repository of free full-text life science articles in the world, containing over 15 million articles and nearly 1 million total free full-text articles, with approximately 10,000 more articles becoming available free each month. Since May 2, 2005, 121,434 free articles had been posted at HighWire, in striking contrast with 346 free author manuscripts that had been posted by PMC.
2. Linking would enable NIH to direct the public to vastly more scientific and health information, because NIH estimates it funds only about 10% of the research that is published in the scientific literature.
3. NIH could make these articles available to the public at significantly less cost than the new NIH policy, which requires NIH to receive, edit, and post manuscripts, since publishers are already providing these services at no additional cost to the public.
4. Compliance with new NIH policy would dramatically increase because scientist-authors would not have to take any additional steps to comply; they would simply continue submitting their manuscripts to their professional journals, as they always have.
5. Scientist-authors would be protected from inadvertently violating the copyright agreements that they commonly sign with journals prior to the publication of their work.
6. NIH could spend far less time and effort educating scientists regarding the submission of manuscripts. NIH would work instead with scientific journal staff to ensure the successful linking to articles.
7. The public would have access to the most accurate scientific information possible because they would see only the final, published version of the article, not the author's unedited manuscript.
8. The integrity of the scientific record would be ensured because only the final, published version of the article would be publicly available and privately archived by NIH.
9. Not-for-profit journals would be better able to retain the value of their journals' identities and investments, helping to sustain the functions of peer-review and publishing of research results.

### **Why NIH should rely on professional scientific societies**

Not-for-profit scientific journals are integral parts of professional scientific societies and play a critically important role in the development and advancement of science. Our societies and the journals they publish are responsible stewards of the scientific and biomedical literature,

providing high quality peer-review, editing, publishing and archiving services for NIH-funded research. In this capacity, we have had a long, successful, and valued public-private partnership with NIH that we hope will continue to flourish. The proposal we put forth today would strengthen that important partnership and offers the best possibility for NIH to achieve its goals promptly, efficiently, at low cost, and with the support of the scientific publishing community.

**List of groups co-signing (Organization and Journal(s))**

American Academy of Periodontology  
*Journal of Periodontology*

American Association for Cancer Research  
*Cancer Research*  
*Clinical Cancer Research*  
*Molecular Cancer Therapeutics*  
*Molecular Cancer Research*  
*Cancer Epidemiology, Biomarkers & Prevention.*

American Association for Clinical Chemistry  
*Clinical Chemistry*

American Association of Immunologists  
*The Journal of Immunology*

American College of Chest Physicians  
*CHEST*

American College of Physicians  
*Annals of Internal Medicine*  
*ACP Journal Club*

American Dairy Science Association  
*Journal of Dairy Science*

American Dental Association  
*The Journal of the American Dental Association*

American Dental Education Association  
*Journal of Dental Education*

American Diabetes Association  
*Diabetes*  
*Diabetes Care*  
*Clinical Diabetes*  
*Diabetes Spectrum*

American Geriatrics Society  
*The Journal of the American Geriatrics Society*

American Institute of Biological Sciences  
*BioScience*

American Physiological Society  
*American Journal of Physiology (AJP)*  
*AJP - Cell Physiology*  
*AJP - Endocrinology and Metabolism*  
*AJP - Gastrointestinal and Liver Physiology*  
*AJP - Heart and Circulatory Physiology*  
*AJP - Lung Cellular and Molecular Physiology*  
*AJP - Regulatory, Integrative and Comparative Physiology*  
*AJP - Renal Physiology*  
*Journal of Applied Physiology*  
*Journal of Neurophysiology*  
*Physiological Reviews*  
*Physiological Genomics*  
*Advances in Physiology Education*  
*Physiology*

American Psychiatric Association  
*American Journal of Psychiatry*  
*Psychiatric Services*  
*Academic Psychiatry*  
*Psychosomatics*  
*The Journal Of Neuropsychiatry and Clinical Neurosciences*  
*Focus—The Journal of Lifelong learning in Psychiatry*

American Roentgen Ray Society  
*American Journal of Roentgenology*

American Society for Biochemistry and Molecular Biology  
*The Journal of Biological Chemistry*  
*Molecular and Cellular Proteomics*  
*Journal of Lipid Research*

American Society for Clinical Pathology  
*American Journal of Clinical Pathology*  
*LabMedicine*

American Society for Investigative Pathology  
*The American Journal of Pathology*  
*The Journal of Molecular Diagnostics*

American Society for Nutrition

*The Journal of Nutrition*

*American Journal of Clinical Nutrition*

American Society for Pharmacology and Experimental Therapeutics

*Journal of Pharmacology and Experimental Therapeutics*

*Pharmacological Reviews*

*Molecular Pharmacology*

*Drug Metabolism and Disposition*

*Molecular Interventions*

American Society of Animal Science

*The Journal of Animal Science*

American Society of Hematology

*Blood*

American Society of Human Genetics

American Society of Plant Biologists

*Plant Physiology*

*The Plant Cell*

American Society of Tropical Medicine and Hygiene

*American Journal of Tropical Medicine and Hygiene*

American Thoracic Society

*American Journal of Respiratory Cell and Molecular Biology*

*American Journal of Respiratory and Critical Care Medicine*

*Proceeding of the American Thoracic Society*

Association for Molecular Pathology

*The Journal of Molecular Diagnostics*

Biophysical Society

*Biophysical Journal*

Botanical Society of America

*American Journal of Botany*

*Plant Science Bulletin*

Cold Spring Harbor Laboratory Press

*Genes & Development*

*Genome Research*

*Learning & Memory*

European Molecular Biology Organization  
*The EMBO Journal*  
*EMBOreports*

Federation of American Societies for Experimental Biology  
*The FASEB Journal*

HighWire Press, Stanford University

Infectious Diseases Society of America  
*Journal of Infectious Diseases*  
*Clinical Infectious Diseases*

Massachusetts Medical Society  
*New England Journal of Medicine*

Ornithological Council  
*Auk* (American Ornithologists' Union)  
*Condor* (Cooper Ornithological Society)  
*Journal of Field Ornithology* (Association of Field Ornithologists)  
*Studies in Avian Biology* (Cooper Ornithological Society)  
*Pacific Seabirds* (Pacific Seabird Group)  
*Wilson Bulletin* (Wilson Ornithological Society)

Poultry Science Association  
*Journal of Applied Poultry Research*  
*Poultry Science*

Project Hope  
*Health Affairs*

Society for Experimental Biology and Medicine  
*Experimental Biology and Medicine*

Society for Leukocyte Biology  
*Journal of Leukocyte Biology*

Society for the Study of Reproduction  
*Biology of Reproduction*

Society of Nuclear Medicine  
*Journal of Nuclear Medicine Technology*  
*The Journal of Nuclear Medicine*

Society of Toxicologic Pathology  
*Toxicologic Pathology*

The American Society of Nephrology  
*Journal of the American Society of Nephrology*  
*Clinical Journal of the American Society of Nephrology*

The Association for Research in Vision and Ophthalmology  
*Investigative Ophthalmology & Visual Science*  
*Journal of Vision*

The Endocrine Society  
*Endocrinology*  
*Endocrine Reviews*  
*The Journal of Clinical Endocrinology & Metabolism*  
*Molecular Endocrinology*

The Entomological Society of America  
*Annals of the Entomological Society of America*  
*Environmental Entomology*  
*Journal of Economic Entomology*  
*Journal of Medical Entomology*  
*American Entomologist*

The Histochemical Society  
*Journal of Histochemistry and Cytochemistry*

The Physiological Society  
*Experimental Physiology*  
*The Journal of Physiology*

The Protein Society  
*Protein Science*

The International & American Associations for Dental Research  
*Journal of Dental Research*  
*Critical Reviews in Oral Biology & Medicine*  
*Advances in Dental Research*

The Radiological Society of North America  
*Radiology*  
*RadioGraphics*

The RNA Society  
*RNA*

The Rockefeller University Press  
*The Journal of Cell Biology*  
*The Journal of Experimental Medicine*  
*The Journal of General Physiology*

The Royal College of Psychiatrists  
*British Journal of Psychiatry*  
*Psychiatric Bulletin*  
*Advances in Psychiatric Treatment*

The Society of Surgical Oncology  
*Annals of Surgical Oncology*