



JUL 01 2004

Martin Frank, Ph.D.  
Coordinator, DC Principles Coalition  
Executive Director, American Physiological Society  
9650 Rockville Pike  
Bethesda, Maryland 20814

Dear Dr. Frank:

Thank you for your letter on behalf of the signatories of the Washington DC Principles for Free Access to Science. The National Institutes of Health (NIH) is aware of advocacy for and concerns about the traditional publication business model, and we are monitoring the efforts to initiate and encourage open access publishing.

NIH would like to encourage improved access to the scientific literature, and we are considering how the agency should be involved. As a major research funding institution, NIH pays a significant share of journal costs through charges to direct costs of research awards and through indirect cost payments to grantee institutions. Presumably, NIH would be a major payer of manuscript publication fees required to cover publication costs under the open-access publication model as well. We are attempting to understand the costs and the broader implications for supporting public research. We must also consider the incentives of NIH reimbursement policies for controlling publication costs, as well as for maintaining high quality review and encouraging the healthy diversity in editorial policies that exists today.

We are reviewing our policies regarding publication of NIH-funded research, and we are working to develop a policy regarding NIH support for open access. In that regard, as I am sure you know, under current NIH policies, grantees can spend part of the award amount on open-access publication costs. Also, NIH supports the ongoing operation of PubMed Central (<http://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/PubMed/>) as a free-access repository and permanent archive for all published research manuscripts to provide an increasing amount of freely available biomedical literature to the public via the Internet.

We appreciate your letter of interest, and we will take your views under consideration during our deliberations. I also have sent the same response to Peter Banks, Publisher, American Diabetes Association, and to Lenne P. Miller, Senior Director, Publications, the Endocrine Society.

Sincerely,

Elias A. Zerhouni, M.D.  
Director