



THE AMERICAN ASSOCIATION OF
IMMUNOLOGISTS

AAI Statement on NIH Director Dr. Francis Collins' Decision to Step Down

October 6, 2021 – Gary A. Koretzky, M.D., Ph.D., president of The American Association of Immunologists (AAI), issued the following statement in response to yesterday's announcement that Francis Collins, M.D., Ph.D., will step down as director of the National Institutes of Health (NIH) by the end of this year, though he will continue to lead his research lab at the NIH National Human Genome Research Institute (NHGRI).

On behalf of AAI, I extend our great appreciation to Dr. Francis Collins for his dedicated leadership at NIH. From his 15 years as director of NHGRI where he led the successful effort to map the human genome, to his 12 years of exemplary leadership as NIH director, Dr. Collins spearheaded our nation's efforts to understand – and fight – disease and disability. His deep commitment to NIH as an institution, and his immense personal credibility, brought NIH extraordinary bipartisan support from three presidents and on Capitol Hill. And his remarkable ability to communicate the complexity of science to the lay public, particularly during the COVID-19 pandemic, no doubt saved countless lives.

Upon his departure as director, Dr. Collins will leave NIH and the broader biomedical research community a strong policy legacy designed to, among other things, expand support for the next generation of scientists, promote diversity in the biomedical research workforce, and embrace bold new initiatives to advance research from bench to bedside. We will be excited to learn about his own new discoveries as Dr. Collins continues his research program in his laboratory at NHGRI.

AAI thanks Dr. Collins for his decades of dedication to scientific discovery and the NIH, for his appreciation of the needs of both patients and researchers, and for his willingness to continue to lead NIH at a time when the nation most needed his leadership. We wish him the very best as he begins the next chapter of his career.