



April 1, 2011

Dr. Francis Collins
Director, National Institutes of Health
1 Center Drive, MSC 0148 (Room 126)
Bethesda, MD 20892-0148
Email: francis.collins@nih.gov

Dear Dr. Collins,

On behalf of the Alliance for Taxpayer Access (ATA), a diverse and growing alliance of more than 100 organizations representing millions of taxpayers – patients, physicians, researchers, and institutions of all kinds – who support open public access to taxpayer-funded research, I write to congratulate you on the third anniversary of the highly successful Public Access Policy at the National Institutes of Health (NIH).

We applaud the leadership that you and the NIH have shown in implementing the first U.S. policy to ensure that all members of the public – including patients and their families, health care professionals, researchers, entrepreneurs and business owners – are guaranteed free online access to articles reporting on the results of research that their tax dollars support.

The more than two million full-text articles in PubMed Central contain a wealth of information on the very latest biomedical research, and have provided the American public with an invaluable new resource to use in a variety of new ways. As result of the NIH's – and your – commitment to public access to the results of publicly funded research:

- Scientists now have faster access to results to build on – speeding their understanding of complex diseases and their progress toward effective interventions.
- Patients and health care providers now have access to up-to-date information about medical conditions affecting them – empowering them to make better-informed decisions about health care, together.
- Businesses and entrepreneurs now have faster access to the latest research, allowing them to more rapidly integrate these into their development cycles and spurring the creation of new products and services.

Additionally, the ATA appreciates that these articles (which prohibitive pricing and permission barriers previously made it difficult for many to obtain) are now connected to the rich array of other publicly available databases at NIH – greatly enhancing both their value and utility. In a world where interdisciplinary research is increasingly the norm, providing our scientists with tools to comprehensively access and use this information digitally is key to accelerating the pace of scientific discovery and speeding returns to the public.

To build on this achievement and further enhance the value of the public's annual \$30 billion investment in scientific research at the NIH, we ask that you consider shortening the policy's embargo period to six months or less.

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- A six-month embargo is more reflective of the fast pace of biomedical research and enables funders of biomedical research to ensure their funded results are available to be used and built upon by the broadest possible community -- in a timely manner.

A move to a six-month embargo period would align the NIH policy with that of the majority of other biomedical research funders around the world -- both public and private -- that have such policies. The Canadian Institutes of Health Research, the UK Biomedical Research Council, and the Wellcome Trust are major funders who have successfully implemented policies with a six-month embargo, for example. To demonstrate how widely accepted a practice this is, consider that over 90% of the research articles reporting on publicly funded biomedical research in the U.K. are made available via policies with a six-month maximum embargo period.

- A six-month embargo period is widely used by highly respected, well-established publishers of biomedical research articles. Journals ranging in size and scope -- from *Nature* to *PNAS* to *Diabetes* to *The Journal of Neuroscience* to *Eukaryotic Cell* -- all voluntarily employ six-month or shorter embargo periods. The established practice of releasing content after a six-month embargo in the biomedical publishing community demonstrates the acceptability and viability of such an embargo period to all stakeholders.

Dr. Collins, thank you once again for your leadership on the important issue of ensuring public access to the results of publicly funded research, and for your consideration of this important request. Please do not hesitate to contact me if I can provide you with any additional information.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Heather Joseph". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

Heather Joseph
Director, Alliance for Taxpayer Access

(Attachment)



Members

Action to Cure Kidney Cancer - NY
AIDS Action Baltimore - MD
AIDS Vaccine Advocacy Coalition - NY
American Association of Law Libraries - DC
American Library Association - DC
American Medical Student Association - VA
Amherst College Library - MA
Anaheim Public Library System, Central Branch - CA
Appalachian State University Library - NC
Arthritis Foundation - DC
Asian & Pacific Islander American Health Forum - DC
Association of Academic Health Sciences Libraries - WA
Association of Cancer Online Resources - NY
Association of College & Research Libraries - IL
Association of Maternal and Child Health Programs - DC
Association of Research Libraries - DC
Association of Southeastern Research Libraries - GA
Autism Speaks (formerly National Alliance for Autism Research) - DC
Autosomal Recessive Polycystic Kidney Disease and Congenital Hepatic Fibrosis Alliance (ARPKD/CHF Alliance) - PA
Barth Syndrome Foundation - FL
Boston College Libraries - MA
Boston Library Consortium - MA
Bowdoin College Library - ME
Bowling Green State University Libraries - OH
Breast Cancer Network of Strength - IL
Carnegie Mellon University Libraries - PA
CFIDS Association of America - NC
Chemists Without Borders - CA
Chordoma Foundation - NC
Christopher Reeve Foundation - DC
Colorectal Cancer Coalition - DC
Committee for Economic Development - DC
CUNY – City College Libraries - NY
CURE: Citizens United for Research in Epilepsy - IL
Cutaneous Lymphoma Foundation (formerly Mycosis Fungoides Foundation) - MI
Coalition for Heritable Disorders of Connective Tissue - DC
Colorado State University - CO
Conquer Fragile X Syndrome - FL
The Creutzfeldt-Jakob Disease (CJD) Foundation - OH
Cystinosis Research Network - IL
Denison University – William H. Doane Library - OH
Down Syndrome Treatment and Research Foundation - CA
Eastern Kentucky University Libraries - KY
Electronic Frontier Foundation - CA
Emory University Libraries - GA
Essential Action - DC
Facing Our Risk of Cancer Empowered (FORCE) - FL
Francis Countway Library of Medicine (Harvard Medical School) - MA
Fred Hutchinson Cancer Research Center - WA
FreePatentsOnline
Genetic Alliance - DC
Global Neuroscience Initiative Foundation - WA
GNU EPrints - UK
Grand Valley State University Libraries - MI
Greater Western Library Alliance - MO
International Mosaic Down Syndrome Association (IMDSA) - TX
International Journal of Medical Sciences - MD
IP Justice - CA
IsoDicentric 15 Exchange, Advocacy and Support (IDEAS) - OR
Kent State University Libraries - OH
Knowledge Ecology International (formerly Consumer Project on Technology - CPTech) - DC
Linda Hall Library of Science, Engineering & Technology - MO
Loyola University Chicago Libraries - IL
Medical Education Online - MI
Memorial Library, Berry College - GA
National Coalition for PKU & Allied Disorders - MA
National Fragile X Foundation - MI
National Tay-Sachs & Allied Diseases Association - MA
New England Biolabs - MA
Oberlin College - OH
Ohio Library and Information Network - OH
Parent Project Muscular Dystrophy - OH
Planetree - CT
Polio Survivors Association - CA
Prader-Willi Syndrome Association – FL



Members (cont'd)

Pseudoxanthoma Elasticum (PXE) International - DC	University of Colorado at Boulder Libraries - CO
Public Knowledge - DC	University of Connecticut Libraries - CT
Public Library of Science - CA	University of Kansas - KS
Purdue University Libraries - IN	University of New Hampshire - NH
Scholarly Publishing and Academic Resources Coalition (SPARC) - DC	University of North Carolina - Chapel Hill, School of Information and Library Science - NC
South Dakota State University, Hilton M. Briggs Library - SD	University of Wisconsin – Madison Libraries - WI
Special Libraries Association - VA	University of Wisconsin Oshkosh – Forrest R. Polk Library - WI
Spina Bifida Association of America - DC	Utah Academic Library Consortium - UT
Students for Free Culture - FL	Veterinary Information Network - CA
Swarthmore College - PA	Washington State Board for Community & Technical Colleges - WA
Tourette Syndrome Association - DC	Wayne State University College of Nursing - MI
Trinity University Coates Library - TX	Williams College Libraries - MA
Tufts University Libraries - MA	
Turner Syndrome Foundation, Inc. – NJ	
Universities Allied for Essential Medicines - NJ	