

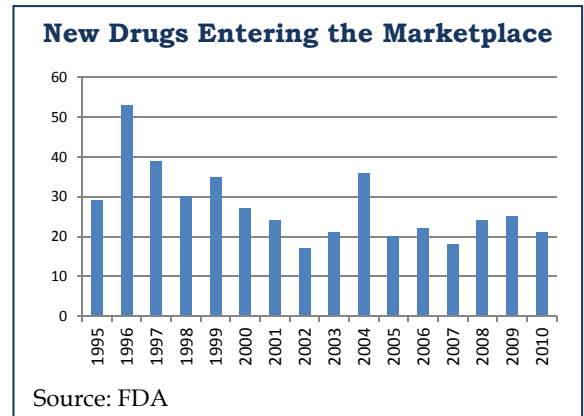
National Center for Advancing Translational Sciences

National Institutes of Health

Rationale

The development, testing, and implementation of new diagnostics and therapeutics is widely recognized as a complex, costly, and risk-laden endeavor. Only a few of the thousands of compounds that enter the drug development pipeline will ultimately make it into the medicine cabinet.

In recent years, there has been a deluge of new discoveries of potential drug targets, yet we still lack effective therapeutics for many conditions, especially rare and neglected diseases. A major problem is that the drug pipeline, from development through implementation into patient care, is full of bottlenecks that slow the process and add expense.



A Role for NIH

To address these challenges, the National Institutes of Health (NIH) has established the National Center for Advancing Translational Sciences (NCATS). NCATS will study the steps in diagnostics and therapeutics development, testing, and implementation into patient care; identify bottlenecks amenable to re-engineering; and experiment with innovative methods to streamline the process.

NCATS will complement – not compete with – translational research being carried out by the private sector. By focusing on the development of innovative new ways of conducting therapeutic and diagnostic discovery, as opposed to developing therapeutics themselves, NCATS can enable others to bring safer and more effective treatments to patients.

Mission

To catalyze the generation of innovative methods and technologies that will enhance the development, testing, and implementation of diagnostics and therapeutics across a wide range of human diseases and conditions



NIH is well-suited for the rigorous evidence-based research that is needed to develop better approaches and technologies that can enhance the entire field of translational science. This past summer, NIH Director Francis Collins published a commentary in *Science Translational Medicine* (6 July 2011, Vol. 3, Issue 90), which provides a detailed description of the goals and key focus areas of NCATS.

Organization

NCATS will be established by realigning extant NIH programs with unique expertise into one home with a common mission. In addition, there will be many dotted lines – success in this new endeavor will rely heavily upon establishing effective collaborations and partnerships across disciplines and sectors.

Next Steps

NIH currently is seeking exceptional candidates to serve as Director of NCATS. In the interim, NCATS will be led by Acting Director Thomas Insel and Acting Deputy Director Kathy Hudson.