

May 30, 2024

Joshua Gordon, M.D., Ph.D.
Director
National Institute of Mental Health

National Advisory Mental Health Council (NAMHC)
National Institute of Mental Health

Dear Dr. Gordon and Council Members,

We, the undersigned physicians, scientists, and mental health professionals, are writing to you today about a matter of great importance and shared concern for all of us: improving our country's investment in mental health research and prevention.

As you know, one in five U.S. adults—an estimated 52.9 million people—experienced mental illness in 2020 but only half of them received treatment. Former National Institute of Mental Health (NIMH) directors and National Advisory Mental Health Council members have attributed a portion of this failure in meeting the needs of patients on NIMH's overemphasis on basic neuroscience research, at the expense of services and interventions, and its misguided reliance on experiments on animals at the expense of studying humans and human systems.

We are particularly concerned that the NIMH's continued funding of experiments on animals is hampering progress in this area, and we urge you and your staff to take the following actions:

1. Redirect NIMH research funding toward animal-free, human-relevant models.
2. Provide regulators and researchers with opportunities to receive free training and education on the use of human-relevant models.
3. Increase the percentage of federal funding allocated toward programs designed to improve mental health and help prevent or mitigate mental illness.

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