

January 19, 2005

NOTE TO: *Elias Zerhouni*

FROM: *Michael Gottesman*

SUBJECT: *Request for Approval of a Proposal to Extend Postdoctoral IRTAs for a Terminal 6th Year*

The Scientific Directors have recommended the attached proposal to allow an exceptional terminal 6th year for selected postdoctoral Intramural Research Training Award (IRTA) recipients.

This proposal would:

- allow continued training beyond the normal 5 year limit for a final 6th year, after which the fellow would leave the NIH
- be limited to select high-quality fellows based on well-articulated career plans [*NOTE: These training plans are also required for fellows entering their 4th year, so that an additional extension is less likely to be needed.*]

I am aware that this new policy appears to extend postdoctoral training at a time when we all agree that postdoctoral training is too long. However, these fellows would otherwise have been offered Research Fellow appointments (which require FTEs) and therefore this represents a change in appointment mechanism, not an extension of total time at NIH. Furthermore, after one year of piloting this policy, it has been used rarely (17 times out of a total of approximately 800 IRTAs and CRTAs).

//s//

Michael M. Gottesman, M.D.
Deputy Director for Intramural Research

Approved: _____ x _____ Disapproved: _____ Dated February 9, 2005

Signed: _____ //s// __, Elias Zerhouni, M.D., Director, NIH