

# Message from the Director

**T**he National Institute of Diabetes and Digestive and Kidney Diseases (NIDDK) continues to support a strong portfolio of basic and clinical research, encompassing a wide range of chronic and costly diseases. With NIDDK funding, talented researchers are capitalizing on the wealth of new knowledge generated by the biotechnology revolution, genetics research, cell biology and other fields. Building on this progress, we now have unprecedented opportunities to combat many critical health issues, including diabetes, gastrointestinal problems, diseases of the kidney and urinary tract, and blood disorders. Finding safe and effective treatments and developing strategies to both cure and prevent disease are the ultimate endpoints toward which we strive.



We recognize that this year has been particularly challenging for America. No one—no matter what his or her field of endeavor—has been untouched by the tragedy of September 11, 2001, and its aftermath. With the unbearable sadness of this tragedy has also come a renewed dedication on the part of all Americans to work together toward our mutual goals. Biomedical research well exemplifies this commitment, as its goal is to improve and enhance the health and well-being of all Americans through the discovery and application of new scientific knowledge. The terrible events of September 11 have served to remind us that life is indeed a precious gift. The vigorous biomedical research efforts of the NIH are a critical means of preserving and extending this gift by bringing the benefits of American science to the world.

A few examples of the many research advances by NIDDK-funded scientists are provided in this annual compendium, along with highlights of the technologies that made these achievements possible. These advances range from basic findings in genetics—such as discovery of a novel susceptibility gene for Crohn’s Disease—to impressive results from clinical trials—such as the demonstration that type 2 diabetes can be prevented or delayed in a diverse American population. These are just two examples from the many research advances presented in this booklet, most of which were published in fiscal year 2001. In addition, we have also included a few “Stories of Discovery,” which trace research advances over a much longer period of time and illustrate how the accumulation of new knowledge is often an incremental process, with each new finding adding to the science base from which clinical advances eventually flow. Also featured are some personal stories of patients whose lives have been adversely affected by disease, and for whom research brings hope.

We view this publication as a vignette of the impressive accomplishments of NIDDK-supported researchers, as well as the enormous promise their research efforts hold for the future. The examples given here are representative of the much larger and broader research portfolio funded by the NIDDK. In developing this booklet, we have simply tried to give a sampling of the vigorous research efforts we are supporting across the many scientific disciplines and categorical disease areas encompassed within the NIDDK mission. As we mine these research advances for further insights and new opportunities, we remain committed to the translation of science into improvements in the quality of life for all people. We are dedicated to that goal.

**Allen M. Spiegel, M.D.**

*Director*

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