



THE NIH DIRECTOR

NIH Takes Action to Ensure Alzheimer's Researchers have Access to Critical Mouse Models

June 17, 2011

NIH is committed to making sure that researchers have the tools they need to find the causes of and cures for debilitating diseases. Such research tools include special mice used in Alzheimer's disease research. Given the enormous toll that Alzheimer's disease takes on individuals, families, and our nation's health care costs, it is critical that this research go forward as vigorously as possible. These mice are made available to researchers by the Jackson Laboratory, a non-profit research institution located in Bar Harbor, Maine. Since 2003 NIH has funded the Jackson Laboratory for the distribution of these mice. The Jackson Laboratory's ability to provide the mice is now threatened by a lawsuit brought by a company, the Alzheimer's Institute of America, Inc. (AIA), that asserts that the Jackson Laboratory is infringing its patents.

On June 17, Dr. Francis S. Collins, NIH Director, took action to ensure that Alzheimer's disease researchers continue to have access to critical research tools and can continue their research to find effective ways to diagnose, treat, and prevent this devastating disease. The NIH has notified the Jackson Laboratory that it has the permission, referred to in legal terms as "authorization and consent," of the United States Government to use any inventions covered by United States patents, including the AIA patents that were necessary under a program funded by NIH to distribute Alzheimer's mice.

Francis S. Collins, M.D., Ph.D.
Director, National Institutes of Health

This page last reviewed on June 21, 2011

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