

# Making research accessible: National Institutes of Health (NIH) public access and PNAS open access policies

In an effort to establish a “comprehensive, searchable, electronic resource of NIH-funded research results and provide free access to all,” NIH has unveiled its long-awaited public access policy. The policy, which goes into effect May 2, 2005, requests, not requires, that NIH-funded investigators submit to PubMed Central (PMC) their accepted, peer reviewed manuscripts for posting at PMC within 1 year of publication in a journal. This policy will ensure that publicly funded research is publicly accessible. The authority and influence of NIH will encourage further progress in this important area.

PNAS complies with the NIH public access policy, and our journal policies extend public access even further. The PNAS copyright policy gives authors permission to deposit their manuscripts in PMC upon acceptance. Authors can request public access to their manuscripts either 6 months after print publication or immediately upon publication if they have paid PNAS the open access fee. However, under the existing partnership between PNAS and PMC, au-

thors can rely on PNAS to provide PMC with the official publisher version of their papers. The publisher version will, according to the new NIH policy, supersede any unformatted version deposited by the authors. PNAS automatically deposits the final, copyedited and formatted version of all its content, regardless of funding, in PMC and makes it free at both PMC and PNAS just 6 months after publication. Authors who choose the PNAS open access option have their final, copyedited and formatted papers made available for free at PMC and PNAS immediately upon online publication. Currently, the PNAS open access surcharge is \$750 for authors from institutions with a 2005 site license/open access membership and \$1,000 in the rare cases when an author's institution does not have a site license.

Although the NIH policy has been significantly scaled back from the one initially proposed in late 2004, I commend NIH Director Elias Zerhouni for taking an initial step toward a more accessible scientific literature, and I encourage him to do even more. The 2004

draft NIH policy indicated that NIH-funded authors would be *required* to provide a final version of their paper within 6 months of publication. The Council of the National Academy of Sciences unanimously endorsed this more comprehensive public access plan (1).

I hope the scientific community will urge Dr. Zerhouni to adopt the more progressive policies proposed in 2004 as part of the next step in ensuring increased public access to research. Authors can make the new NIH policy more effective by submitting to journals that participate in PMC and by requesting deposition and public release of their papers well before 1 year after publication. I hope that NIH will encourage authors to take advantage of open access by explicitly providing grant funds to pay for it. We look forward to partnering with NIH to achieve the widest possible dissemination of scientific research.

Nicholas R. Cozzarelli,  
*Editor-in-Chief*

1. Cozzarelli, N. R., Fulton, K. R. & Sullenberger, D. M. (2004) *Proc. Natl. Acad. Sci. USA* **101**, 14991.