As the Director of the National Institutes of Health (NIH), I am pleased to present the Congressional Justification of the NIH fiscal year (FY) 2017 budget request. This budget request for a $33.136 billion total program level reflects the President's and the Secretary's dedication to improving the health and wellness of all Americans, as well as the Administration's commitment to ensuring the country's place as the global leader in biomedical science. The request articulates NIH's focus on basic research to identify underlying causes of disease, as well as bold new efforts to translate basic science discoveries into effective interventions. The Agency is capitalizing on advances in big data and technology to improve diagnostics, treatments, and preventive approaches. NIH also remains committed to further developing and supporting a diverse and talented biomedical research workforce. The investments outlined herein will enable NIH to remain on the cutting edge of scientific breakthroughs that deliver on our mission – to enhance health, lengthen life, and reduce illness and disability.

The recently released NIH-Wide Strategic Plan (Fiscal Years 2016-2020) describes the Agency's dedication to planning and priority setting in order to serve as a responsible steward of the public funds with which it is entrusted. The emphasis on stewardship is intertwined throughout this budget request, articulating how NIH strives to manage our resources and cultivate our role as a leader in biomedical research and policy across the country and around the world. Prudent resource management also is reflected in the Agency's priority setting process. Through a deliberative balance of supporting highly meritorious research while addressing public health needs, NIH remains poised to take advantage of emerging scientific opportunities, including the unique opportunities presented by rare diseases. These processes afford the flexibility to respond urgently to public health crises, and to fund exceptionally innovative, investigator-initiated ideas.

The budget request also discusses some of the most exciting scientific research areas that NIH plans to support in FY 2017. Advances and further investment in basic science promise to revolutionize how we view microscopic particles and image various parts of the body; explain how brain circuits interact in time and space (the BRAIN initiative); and provide new understanding of how cells and organ systems work. Bridging both basic and translational research, the President's Precision Medicine Initiative offers the opportunity to usher in a new era of medicine in which researchers, providers, and participants work together to develop individualized treatment and prevention strategies. Instead of recommending a treatment based on how the average person might respond, precision medicine takes into account individual variability in genes, environment, and lifestyle, which can be used to select a targeted therapy for each person that may be more effective than the "average" option. Robust investment in emerging technologies will facilitate the success of precision medicine and other areas of bioscience.

Capping off the new initiatives, and with passionate and principled leadership from the Vice President, the National Cancer Moonshot will work to accelerate cancer research efforts and break down barriers to progress by enhancing data access and facilitating collaborations. The initiative focuses particularly on cancer immunotherapy, and aims to make more therapies available to more patients while also improving our ability to prevent cancer and detect it at an early stage.

The FY 2017 budget request represents an extraordinary opportunity for NIH to advance biomedical research in ways not previously possible. By capitalizing on groundbreaking advances in science and technology, and judiciously leveraging new research investments, biomedical science is poised to make substantial gains in diagnosing, treating, and preventing disease. I look forward to discussing the FY 2017 budget request and NIH's plans for the future.

Francis S. Collins, M.D., Ph.D.