‘Scaling Up’: Love Collins, III, Sets High Philanthropic Goals for the FNIH

The FNIH recently welcomed Love Collins, III, as vice president of advancement. In this role, he serves as the organization’s chief development officer, leading efforts to expand the portfolio of resources and accelerate the launch of new collaborative biomedical research programs and related scientific efforts in support of the NIH.

We sat down with Mr. Collins to learn what drew him to the FNIH, how his wide-ranging professional background has prepared him for his new role, and his goals for furthering the FNIH mission.

Accelerating Medicines Partnership® for ALS Garners Headlines

On May 21, the FNIH announced the launch of a new Accelerating Medicines Partnership® (AMP®) program focused on amyotrophic lateral sclerosis (ALS). The program brings together the resources and expertise of the National Institute of Neurological Disorders and Stroke (NINDS) at the National Institutes of Health (NIH), the Food and Drug Administration (FDA), and other stakeholders from academia, life science companies, foundations, research nonprofits, and patient-focused groups.

ALS is a progressive and ultimately fatal neurological disease with few treatment options and no known cure. AMP ALS aims to build the largest data source for ALS research and expedite the identification of biomarkers and clinical outcome assessments that would allow for earlier diagnosis and accelerated drug development.

The announcement has already generated widespread media interest, with a mention in the InnovationRX column in Forbes and articles in several trade outlets, including Fierce Biotech, BioSpace, Healio, and PharmaNews Intelligence. As so poignantly expressed in our new video by AMP ALS steering committee co-chair and Target ALS founder Dan Doctoroff, who lives with the daily challenges of ALS, there is hope. Watch the video on the AMP ALS program.
FDA Accepts Letter of Intent to Qualify Neurofilament as Biomarker of Rare Neurodegenerative Disease

The FNIH Biomarkers Consortium received acceptance from the U.S. Food and Drug Administration for its letter of intent (LOI) to qualify neurofilament, a protein component of neurons, as a biological indicator of frontotemporal degeneration (FTD), a type of dementia that can affect people under age 60. An accepted LOI, which provides early information about the need for a proposed biomarker and its intended context of use in drug development, is the first step in the agency’s Biomarker Qualification Program.

Research shows that an increased amount of neurofilament in the blood is a promising marker of the early stages of neurodegeneration. The ability to measure neurofilament has the potential to help identify people at risk for developing symptoms and enable their participation in clinical trials for new therapies.

FNIH Leaders: Sharing Expertise

Dr. Michael Santos Presents Talk on Vaccine Safety

The FNIH was represented at this year’s World Vaccine Congress in Washington, DC, in April. Michael Santos, PhD, senior vice president and chief population health science officer at the FNIH, gave a presentation titled “Path Forward for Global Public-Private Partnership on Vaccine Safety.” He then joined other panelists to discuss the challenges in vaccine collaboration and funding for research. The World Vaccine Congress is the largest and most established vaccine meeting of its kind, bringing together science, government, and manufacturers. Rebeca Salmeron and Erika Jones, from the Population Health Science team, also attended the meeting.

Dr. Brinda Dass Represents FNIH at UN Meeting on Biodiversity

Brinda Dass, PhD, represented the FNIH as a technical expert on genetically modified organism risk assessment at a recent meeting of the United Nations (UN) Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD) - Subsidiary Body on Scientific, Technical and Technological Advice (SBSTTA).

The meeting, held in May at the United Nations Environment Programme headquarters in Nairobi, Kenya, included representatives from more than 170 countries who meet every two years to deliberate on biodiversity and sustainability issues. During this cycle, Dr. Dass, senior technical expert and policy lead for the GeneConvene Global Collaborative, helped develop a guidance on risk assessment for gene drive-modified mosquitoes.

Read more about the meeting here.
FNIH Leaders: Sharing Expertise (Continued)

Bespoke Gene Therapy Consortium Holds Second Annual Meeting

The Accelerating Medicines Partnership® Bespoke Gene Therapy Consortium (AMP® BGTC), which fosters the development of gene therapies intended to treat rare genetic diseases, hosted its second annual meeting in May.

Held during an afternoon session of the weeklong American Society of Gene & Cell Therapy (ASGCT) annual conference, the BGTC meeting included a patient engagement panel, featuring FNIH patient ambassadors Sharon King and Terry Pirovolakis, as well as Debra Miller from CureDuchenne, Dominique Pichard from the National Center for Advancing Translational Sciences, and Adrian McKemey from IQVIA.

A full recap of the BGTC’s annual meeting was published by BioSpace, and a video recap will be shared by the FNIH in the coming months. Learn more about the vital work of the BGTC by visiting this webpage.

Photo: Team members staff the BGTC exhibit hall booth during the ASGCT annual meeting.

For the FNIH, 2023 was a year when science sparked alliance, allowing us to further our goal of building bridges to biomedical breakthroughs – and better health for people everywhere. We are excited to share some highlights of the year in the recently released FNIH 2023 Health Impact Report.

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The FNIH added two members to its Board of Directors earlier this month: James W. Down, former vice chairman of Mercer Management Consulting, and Perry Steiner, chairman and CEO of Xactus.

"I am excited to welcome Jim and Perry to the FNIH Board," said Steve Paul, MD, board chairman. "Each offers a unique perspective and skill set that will enrich our board of exceptional leaders as we work together to solve complex health challenges and build bridges to scientific breakthroughs for patients."

We invite you to join philanthropists, NIH leaders, our partners from industry, scientists, academics, thought leaders, and key stakeholders to celebrate scientific achievement and collaboration at this year’s FNIH Awards Ceremony.

For over a decade, the FNIH has been recognizing and elevating the work of exceptional early-career scientists at this annual event through the prestigious Lurie Prize in Biomedical Sciences and the Trailblazer Prize for Clinician-Scientists. Our unique ability to convene the best and the brightest to form innovative and impactful public-private partnerships is highlighted by the Charles A. Sanders, MD, Partnership Award, presented to an organization or individual who has exemplified steadfast commitment to our mission.

Join us in our celebration!
Join us in New York City on Sept. 16 as we convene leaders across the public and private sectors, academia, and patient advocacy groups to discover what it will take to achieve tomorrow’s breakthroughs in biomedical sciences.

Engage with the nation’s foremost life science experts as they discuss FNIH’s groundbreaking team science approach to solving complex health challenges. Potential speakers include NIH Director Monica Bertagnolli; Peter Marks, director of the Center for Biologics Evaluation and Research at the FDA; and many other senior life science company and not-for-profit leaders.

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