

DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH AND HUMAN SERVICES

NATIONAL INSTITUTES OF HEALTH

Testimony before the Senate Health, Education, Labor and Pensions Committee

Hearing on

Protecting U.S. Biomedical Research: Efforts to Prevent Undue Foreign Influence

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Good morning Chair Murray, Ranking Member Burr, and distinguished members of the Subcommittee. It is an honor to appear before you today to discuss how NIH works to protect the integrity of the U.S. biomedical enterprise and neutralize foreign threats to the integrity of taxpayer funded research.

The United States is the world leader in biomedical research. As

NIH identifies and monitors concerns through

- x Prohibition of certain individuals from serving as investigators on NIH grants.
- x Outreach to FBI for assistance.
- x Discovery (through acquisition of certain foreign grants and contracts) of overlapping or duplicative work, or conflicts in stating committed effort to research projects. This discovery has led to NIH suspensions of active grants as appropriate.
- x Efforts to raise awareness among institutional faculty about government and institutional policies dealing with foreign affiliations and relationships (see, for example, the Penn State web site).²

There have also been situations in which honest mistakes were made by research investigators who were unaware of the requirement to disclose other funding sources (both domestic and international) or affiliations with foreign entities. In these cases, we worked with the institutions, which took steps to help their employees understand disclosure policies; both why they are important, and how to comply with relevant rules.

We will continue to address issues of concern. To mitigate security breaches, we have improved the electronic systems that are used by researchers to submit applications to NIH, and that are also used by peer reviewers to access applications for evaluations. Our security updates include: two factor authentication for electronic research system logins; using an all electronic conflict of interest certification; and, development of a

morale of honest and dedicated foreign