



TRAUMA CENTER

Association of America

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February 15, 2019

Diana Bianchi, M.D., Director
Eunice Kennedy Shriver National Institute of Child Health and Human Development

Re: NOT-HD-18-03, Request for Information (RFI): NICHD Strategic Plan Fiscal Years 2020-2024

Dr. Bianchi,

We are writing to you on behalf of the Trauma Center Association of America (TCAA) to request that you continue to include Pediatric Trauma and Critical Care as core research themes in the National Institute of Child Health and Human Development (NICHD) Strategic Plan for FY 2020-2024.

TCAA represents hundreds of trauma centers across the United States, including 30 pediatric trauma centers. Trauma is the leading cause of death in children and research into pathophysiology, treatment, rehabilitation and prevention should therefore have the highest priority for funding. We strongly believe that NIH-funded research initiatives should include work related to pediatric trauma and critical care for the following reasons:

- The lives of survivors of pediatric injuries are significantly impacted in several domains, including academic performance, social integration, and mental health.
- Strategies for evaluating and treating injured children and adolescents cannot be extrapolated from those used to treat adults because of unique injury features and vulnerabilities (e.g., higher morbidity of radiation exposure).
- Treatment responses in children often differ from those observed in adults, requiring separate validation in pediatric populations.
- Differences in care and outcomes between adult and pediatric trauma centers have been identified. These findings need to be used to optimize the care of injured children regardless of the setting in which treatment is provided.
- Recommendations for post-discharge care after injury (e.g., return to play for after concussion) need to be developed, evaluated and disseminate to optimize the short- and long-term outcome after pediatric injury.
- Although mortality is an important metric of the quality of pediatric trauma care, accurate and scalable approaches for evaluating the short- and long-term outcome after injury are lacking and are needed to assess the quality of initial care.
- Identifying the causes and addressing disparities in pediatric trauma care are needed to ensure equitable healthcare in this population.

- Because many pediatric injuries can be prevented, identification of injury-related risk factors and translating this knowledge into targeted injury prevention programs will reduce the health burden of these injuries.
- Unintentional and non-accidental injury in pediatric populations is significant cause of lost productive years and requires further research to develop actionable prevention strategies.
- Pediatric injury influences long-term quality of life and childhood development and negatively impacts healthcare costs.

We greatly appreciate the work that NICHD and its partners have done thus far on pediatric trauma and deeply support NICHD's mission for "all children to have the chance to achieve their full potential for healthy and productive lives." However, more work needs to be done, and as you develop NICHD's Strategic Plan for FY2020 – 2024 we urge you to continue your commitment to research in pediatric trauma and critical care. Thank you for your consideration of this important matter.

Sincerely,



Eileen Whalen, MHA, BSN, RN
Board Chair
Trauma Center Association of America



Jennifer Ward, MBA, RN
President
Trauma Center Association of America