

## Summary of Virtual Strategic Planning Town Hall

Friday, May 4, 2018

### **Overview:**

On Friday, May 4, 2018, NHGRI hosted its first strategic planning town hall to begin hearing from the public about the opportunities across the genomics field that should be considered as the institute pursues its strategic planning process. This 'virtual' town hall was held via teleconference and was open to the public. Attendees had the opportunity to provide comments on all aspects of the strategic planning effort, including scientific opportunities, big challenges for the field, and the design of the strategic planning process.

NHGRI's Division of Policy, Communications and Education director Laura Lyman Rodriguez, Ph.D., and NHGRI director Eric Green, M.D., Ph.D., began by explaining the context for this town hall and providing information on the plans and timeline for the NHGRI strategic planning process. NHGRI last published a strategic plan in 2011 and the plan is to publish the new strategic plan in October 2020. Between now and October 2020, NHGRI will hold town halls and other in-person gatherings across the country to collect input and explore topics to consider in developing a 2020 Vision for Genomics.

Following brief introductory remarks, there was an extended question and answer session with Drs. Rodriguez and Green, as well as several other NHGRI representatives: Les Biesecker, M.D., head of NHGRI's Clinical Genomics Section in the Division of Intramural Research; Carla Easter, Ph.D., chief of the Education and Community Involvement Branch; Elise Feingold, Ph.D., program director in the Division of Genome Sciences; Adam Felsenfeld, Ph.D., program director in the Division of Genome Sciences; Elaine Ostrander, Ph.D. head of NHGRI's Comparative Genetics section in the Division of Intramural Research; Bill Pavan, Ph.D., head of the Genomics of Development and Disease section in the Division of Intramural Research; Adam Phillippy, Ph.D., head of the Genome Informatics section in the Division of Intramural Research; and Anastasia Wise, Ph.D., program director in the Division of Genomic Medicine.

A total of 108 members of the public participated in the virtual town hall. Participants identified their organizational affiliations as academia, non-profits and the private sector.

Several participants commented on technology development needs in the field, including tools to map centromeric regions of the human genome, better resources to manipulate sequencing libraries, and greater attention to connecting technology development to end-users' needs in the clinic.

Participants also discussed challenges to the translation of genomics into the clinic. They commented on the need for more clinical utility data to encourage uptake of pharmacogenomics, appropriate delivery of knowledge and technology to clinicians and patients, and impediments to the integration of family health history information into clinical care.

There was a suggestion to include multi-'omics integration as one of the leading-edge areas that NHGRI should focus on in its new strategic plan.

The final theme of the virtual town hall discussion pertained to the public's understanding of genomics and a suggestion for NHGRI to establish partnerships with the direct-to-consumer genetic testing industry in order to broaden its public outreach.