

**Opening Remarks by Alan Guttmacher, M.D.,
Deputy Director of the National Human Genome Research Institute
National Institutes of Health**

May 28, 2008

Thank you, Francis.

Like the rest of NHGRI's staff, I am, of course, terribly sad to see Dr. Collins leave. Working so closely with him over the past nine years has been rewarding for the remarkable scientific progress we have helped facilitate and also a great personal pleasure. One could not ask for a better leader.

I want to acknowledge that it will be challenging to get things done without Dr. Collins. In addition to being a visionary leader, he has been a great organizer of collaborations, and a great communicator of science.

However, Francis leaves us in a wonderful situation, since he has attracted to the institute such superb staff. NHGRI is run by a highly skilled team of scientists, including Dr. Mark Guyer, who directs the institute's extramural program that funds genomic research across the country and across the globe; and Dr. Eric Green, the Scientific Director who runs the intramural team of scientists who conduct genetic and genomic research here at the NIH.

And, we are blessed with unparalleled scientific opportunity. We face an historic opportunity to understand the intricacies of our shared human genome and how it functions - and to use that understanding to determine how the genome and environmental factors interact to cause health and disease.

Together, NHGRI and its collaborators, both at the NIH and in the extramural community, will continue the work that we can all see before us to bring the promise of genomic science to medical care, in a way that makes health care truly personalized and preemptive.

Francis is a great friend, so I will miss working with him every day. But I am supremely confident that he will find new ways to enrich the lives of people around the globe and I look forward to continuing the proud legacy that he has created at NHGRI.