



September 27, 2023

Eliseo J. Pérez-Stable, M.D.  
Director  
National Institute on Minority Health and Health Disparities  
National Institutes of Health  
6707 Democracy Boulevard, Suite 800  
Bethesda, MD 20892

**Re: Designating People with Disabilities as a Health Disparity Population**

Dear Dr. Pérez-Stable:

On behalf of the Disability & Rehabilitation Research Coalition (DDRR), a coalition of 26 national research, clinical, and consumer non-profit organizations committed to improving the science of rehabilitation, disability, and independent living, we write to sincerely thank you for designating people with disabilities as a distinct health disparity population. This designation is a critical step in addressing health disparities faced by people with disabilities and ensuring their appropriate representation in research. We commend you and your colleagues for your leadership on advancing equity and inclusion through this important designation at the National Institutes of Health.

We also thank you for releasing the Notice of Funding Opportunity entitled “Health and Health Disparities Among Persons Living with Disabilities” to fund research examining the factors impacting the health and well-being of persons with disabilities at the intersections of race, ethnicity, and socioeconomic status. In addition, DRRC will be submitting a letter providing feedback on the proposed update to the NIH mission statement. We are grateful that the NIH is advancing these critical steps to addressing health equity for people with disabilities and look forward to future research initiatives and partnerships.

DRRC looks forward to working with you to promote health equity for people with disabilities. Again, we are thrilled with this decision and commend you for seriously considering the input of persons with disabilities throughout this process.

Sincerely,

DRRC Co-Coordinators

Peter W. Thomas, J.D.

Natalie Keller

## **Members of the Disability and Rehabilitation Research Coalition**

Academy of Spinal Cord Injury Professionals  
American Academy of Orthotists & Prosthetists  
***American Academy of Physical Medicine and Rehabilitation\****  
American Association on Health & Disability  
American Congress of Rehabilitation Medicine  
American Medical Rehabilitation Providers Association  
American Music Therapy Association  
***American Occupational Therapy Association\****  
***American Physical Therapy Association\****  
American Speech-Language-Hearing Association  
American Therapeutic Recreation Association  
Amputee Coalition  
***Association of Academic Physiatrists\****  
Association of Rehabilitation Nurses  
Association of University Centers on Disabilities  
***Brain Injury Association of America\****  
Child Neurology Society  
Christopher & Dana Reeve Foundation  
The Lakeshore Foundation  
National Association for the Advancement Orthotics & Prosthetics  
***National Association of Rehabilitation Research and Training Centers\****  
National Association of State Head Injury Administrators  
National Neurotrauma Society  
Paralyzed Veterans of America  
Rehabilitation Engineering and Assistive Technology Society of North America  
Spina Bifida Association  
United Spinal Association

### ***\*\*DRRC Steering Committee Member***

CC:

DHHS Secretary Xavier Becerra  
Dr. Lawrence Tabak, Acting Director, National Institutes of Health  
Dr. Robert Otto Valdez, Director, Agency for Healthcare Research and Quality  
Alison Barkoff, Acting Administrator, Administration for Community Living  
Dr. Diana Bianchi, Director, National Institute on Child Health and Human Development  
Dr. Alison Cernich, Deputy Director, National Institute on Child Health and Human Development  
Dr. Theresa Cruz, Director, National Center for Medical Rehabilitation Research  
Dr. Anjali Forber-Pratt, Director, National Institute on Disability, Independent Living, and Rehabilitation Research  
Rachel Patterson, Director of Disability Policy of the Domestic Policy Council