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To whom it may concern:

On behalf of the over 3,000 members of the Population Association of America (PAA) and more than 40 population research centers nationwide comprising the Association of Population Centers (APC), we are writing to provide input on the National Institute on Minority Health and Health Disparities (NIMHD) Strategic Plan's 2026-2030 proposed goals. We appreciate the opportunity to share our views.

As you may know, PAA and APC are two affiliated organizations that receive federal funding to examine the causes and consequences of population change. Our members (demographers, economists, sociologists, and epidemiologists) conduct scientific and applied research, analyze changing demographic, health, and socio-economic trends, and train undergraduate and graduate students. Their expertise covers a wide range of issues integral to the NIMHD mission, including social determinants of health, infant and adolescent health and development, aging, maternal health, health disparities, mortality, and disability. The population sciences are indebted to NIMHD for funding and co-funding projects including large-scale longitudinal surveys with population representative samples, such as the National Longitudinal Study of Adolescent to Adult Health, and numerous scientific research initiatives to advance our understanding of how social, behavioral, and biological factors jointly influence human health.

PAA and APC are pleased that the Institute's next strategic plan commits NIMHD to "build on the progress of its predecessor, maintaining and expanding current goals to continue advancing minority health and reducing health disparities." However, we believe that the plan's outline should explicitly commit the Institute to achieving additional objectives. Population scientists who serve on the PAA Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion Committee identified goals that we hope the Institute will consider as it finalizes the NIMHD 2026-2030 strategic plan.

These goals encourage NIMHD to:

1. Prioritize collection of longitudinal data on diverse racial/ethnic populations to better clarify how social, economic, and political processes unfold over the life course to impact physical and mental health;
2. Prioritize research that seeks to understand the effects of social stress exposure, coping approaches, and resilience mechanisms on the mental and physical health of minority populations;
3. Support research to improve understanding of the role of structural determinants of health on the health of minority populations including structural racism, structural sexism, and multiple policy contexts (e.g., city, county, state, region);
4. Support research to improve understanding of psychological, social, and interpersonal factors (e.g., discrimination, social support) that impact physiological processes and their role in shaping minority health disparities;
5. Focus attention on how disproportionately greater environmental impacts (e.g. natural disasters, climate change, environmental toxins, water quality) impact minoritized racial/ethnic communities and affect their mental and physical health;
6. Encourage consideration of how multiple social characteristics intersect (e.g., race, ethnicity, gender identity, sexual orientation, socioeconomic status) to produce health disparities within and across minority populations; and,
7. Encourage research to identify psychological, social, and environmental determinants of physical and mental health within and across rural and urban contexts and enhance related data collection efforts.

Thank you for the opportunity to review the proposed outline and goals of the Institute's 2026-2030 strategic plan. We look forward to working with NIMHD as it refines the goals and details of this consequential document that will guide future scientific advancement.

Sincerely,



Dr. Jennifer Glass  
2024 PAA President



Dr. Jennie Brand  
2023-2024 APC President