**Background**

The *Eunice Kennedy Shriver* National Institute for Child Health and Human Development (NICHD) recently completed a comprehensive strategic planning process which incorporated the views of numerous internal and external stakeholders. The resultant NICHD Strategic Plan 2020 outlines 5 major scientific themes, 5 cross-cutting areas, and 10 aspirational goals.

Two follow-up processes in parallel:
- Functional Needs Analysis and Restructuring in DER (IAP)
- Scientific Implementation (workshops, RFAs, etc.)

**Objective**

Develop improved organization and processes to pursue the NICHD Strategic Plan in the most effective, efficient, and cost-effect ways possible. These processes will optimally be flexible to support new initiatives and challenges.

**Methods**

- Identify core group for discussions (Branch Chiefs and other Sr. Leadership)
- Intermittent meetings with all professional and support staff
- Ensure transparency: OneDrive with all slides, notes
- Multiple opportunities for feedback
- Discussions with other NIH Institutes to identify best practices
- Presentation and discussion with NICHD Director

**Results/Outcomes**

**Problems to Solve:**
- Avoid over consolidation of financial and personnel management
- Improve recruitment, retention, and succession planning
- Increase opportunities for communication with NICHD leadership
- Retain and expand Branch autonomy to greatest extent possible (meetings, funding decisions)
- Facilitate scientific collaboration across Branches and with other NIH Institutes/Centers
- Recognize expertise of branch members; advancement
- Need additional support to manage complex grant mechanisms

**Proposed Solutions:**
- Move administrative functions into a separate Division
- Maintain flat Branch structure vs. re-align into Divisions (pros/cons)
- Formalize coordinating offices with expertise in Clinical Trials, Small Business Grants, trans-NIH grants
- Hire additional personnel: data analysts, project managers, clinical trial specialists

**Summary**

- Extensive meetings, open dialogue, ongoing feedback have resulted in identification of needs and potential solutions with explicitly defined pros and cons
- Did not reach consensus but hopeful for ‘buy in’
- Next steps: organizational charts, position descriptions, public hearings, congressional approvals

**Questions:**

- What are the functional needs of the organization?
- Are new functional capabilities (personnel, software, financial) needed to ensure success?
- How people will be aligned to support any strategy going forward?
- How do we coordinate across functions?