



February 14, 2008

Secretary Michael Leavitt  
U.S. Department of Health and Human Services  
Hubert H. Humphrey Building  
200 Independence Avenue S.W.  
Washington, D.C., 20201

Via Fax: (202) 690-7203

Dear Secretary Leavitt:

On behalf of eight national organizations, collectively representing over 140,000 libraries in the United States and employing over 350,000 librarians and other personnel, we want to thank you for your past support of open and timely Internet access to articles stemming from the critical biomedical research funded by the National Institutes of Health (NIH), and to urge you to ensure that this important policy is implemented without delay.

We understand that a special interest group of publishers has requested that a rule-making procedure be initiated, which would further delay taxpayers' access to the results of our collective \$29 billion investment in this important research. We wish to strongly reiterate that the Alliance and its members enthusiastically support the immediate implementation of the NIH Public Access Policy (NOT-OD-08-033) policy, which was developed in response to Congressional direction (Consolidated Appropriations Act of 2008, PL 110-161, Division G, Title II, Section 218).

As you know, the policy options have been thoroughly discussed over the past four years in Congress, at NIH, in the scientific community, and in public fora. Although support for public access has been broad and opposition has been limited to a relative handful of publishers, NIH has taken a thoughtful, conservative approach, embracing a mandatory policy only after the failure of a two and a half-year experiment with a voluntary approach. NIH Director Zerhouni has gone to great lengths to consult with the range of interested parties and the resulting policy fairly balances their preferences with the public interest.

Special interests must not be allowed to further stall NIH public access. The time for hesitation is past; the benefits of public access are clear. Prompt NIH action to implement the newly announced and clearly articulated policy will ensure that NIH-funded research findings are available to all. Any delay will only hold back scientific advancement and impede the public's access to high-quality health information. The April 7, 2008 implementation date announced by NIH must not be held up.

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Particularly in the current, difficult economic climate, taxpayers have a right to expect that they are getting their money's worth from the federal investment in research. Universal access to NIH research will unlock the full health, economic, and social benefits that motivate NIH appropriations. Any delay will reduce the return on public investment.

We thank you for your leadership in delivering public access to publicly funded research.

Sincerely,

American Association of Law Libraries

[www.aallnet.org](http://www.aallnet.org)

Contact: Mary Alice Baish (202-662-9200)

American Library Association

[www.ala.org](http://www.ala.org)

Contact: Lynne Bradley (202-628-8410)

Association of Academic Health Sciences Libraries

[www.aahsl.org](http://www.aahsl.org)

Contact: Karen Butter (415) 476-8293

Association of College & Research Libraries

[www.ala.org/acrl](http://www.ala.org/acrl)

Contact: Kara Malenfant (312-280-2510)

Association of Research Libraries

[www.arl.org](http://www.arl.org)

Contact: Karla Hahn or Prudence Adler (202-296-2296)

Greater Western Library Alliance

[www.gwla.org](http://www.gwla.org)

Contact: Joni Blake (816-926-8765)

SPARC (Scholarly Publishing & Academic Resources Coalition)

[www.arl.org/sparc](http://www.arl.org/sparc)

Contact: Heather Joseph (202-296-2296)

Special Libraries Association

[www.sla.org](http://www.sla.org)

Contact: Doug Newcomb (703-647-4923)

CC: Deputy Secretary Tevi Troy, Greg Downing