

# The Rare Diseases Clinical Research Network (RDCRN) Program: *A Model for Collaboration with PAGs & Research Resources/Initiatives* at NCATS, NIH

RARE DISEASES SYMPOSIUM

RE(ACT) SWITZERLAND: WE CARE FOR RARE  
GENEVA, NOVEMBER 10TH, 2016

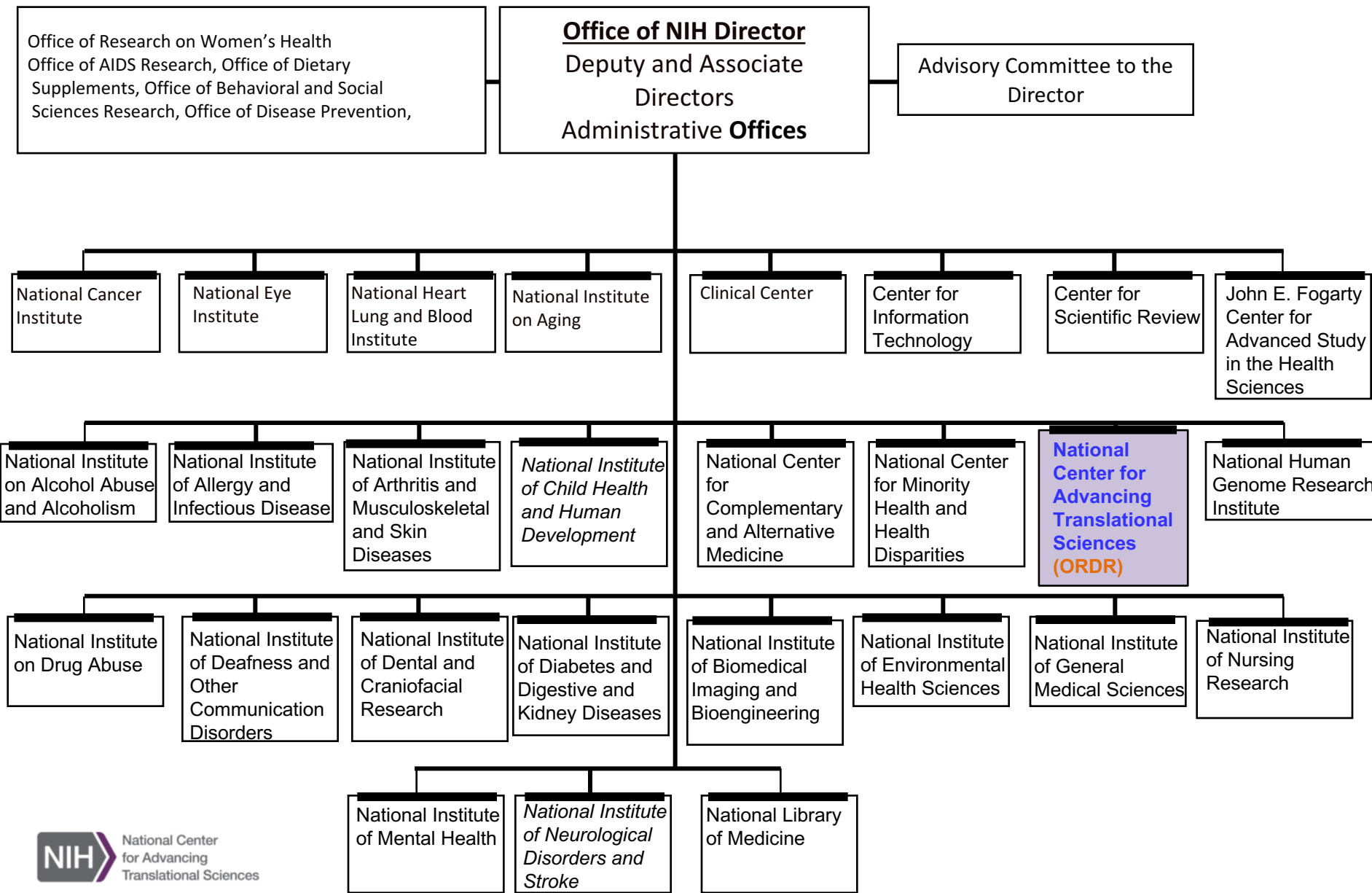
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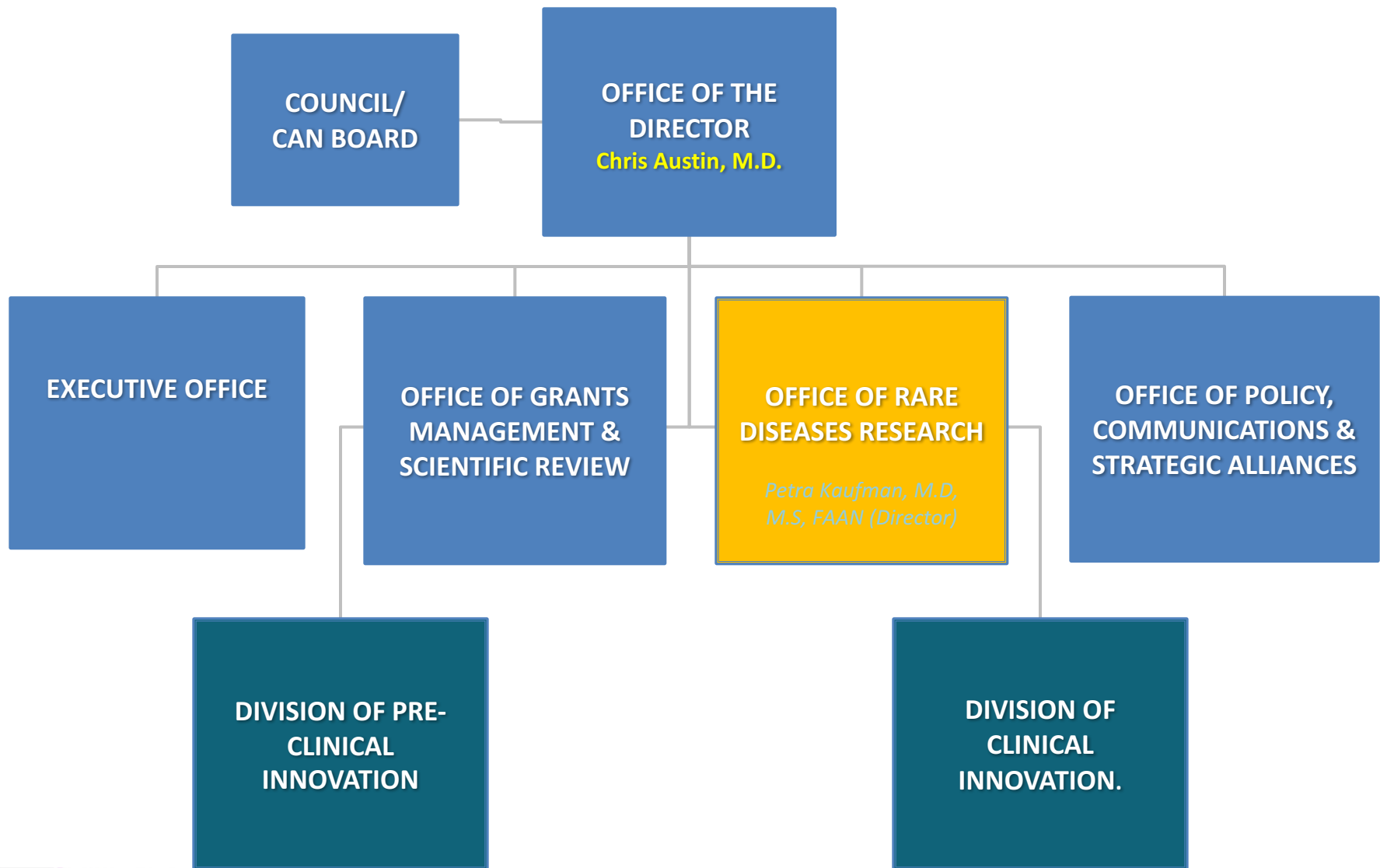
# Outline

- Office of Rare Diseases Research (ORDR), NCATS rare diseases programs
  - RDCRN Program
  - Other programs
- Resources and Opportunities at NCATS for translational research

# A View of the National Institutes of Health (NIH), USA



# National Center for Advancing Translational Sciences (NCATS)





# Office of Rare Diseases Research (ORDR), NCATS Collaborative Programs/Initiatives

*Stimulates and coordinates research on rare diseases*

- **Rare Diseases Clinical Research Network (RDCRN) Program**
- Genetic and Rare Diseases Information Center (GARD)
- Scientific Conferences
- Participation in Bench to Bedside program
- Global Rare Diseases Registry and Repository (GRDR)



## Rare Diseases: Background

Prevalence < 200,000 people  
in the USA

> 6,500 rare diseases

30 M affected in US

Many undiagnosed

< 500 have any treatment

# Challenges for Rare Diseases Research

- Disease often not well characterized or defined
- Rarity means:
  - Recruitment for trials is usually quite difficult
  - Study populations become widely dispersed
  - Few expert centers for diagnosis, management, and research
- Often little high-quality evidence available to guide treatment



# RARE DISEASES CLINICAL RESEARCH NETWORK

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Initiative of the National Center for Advancing  
Translational Sciences (NCATS)

# RDCRN Program at ORDR, NCATS

- Background
- Goals
- Collaborative partners
- Special features of the program
- Examples of successful collaborative efforts

# ***Rare Diseases Clinical Research Network (RDCRN) Program:***

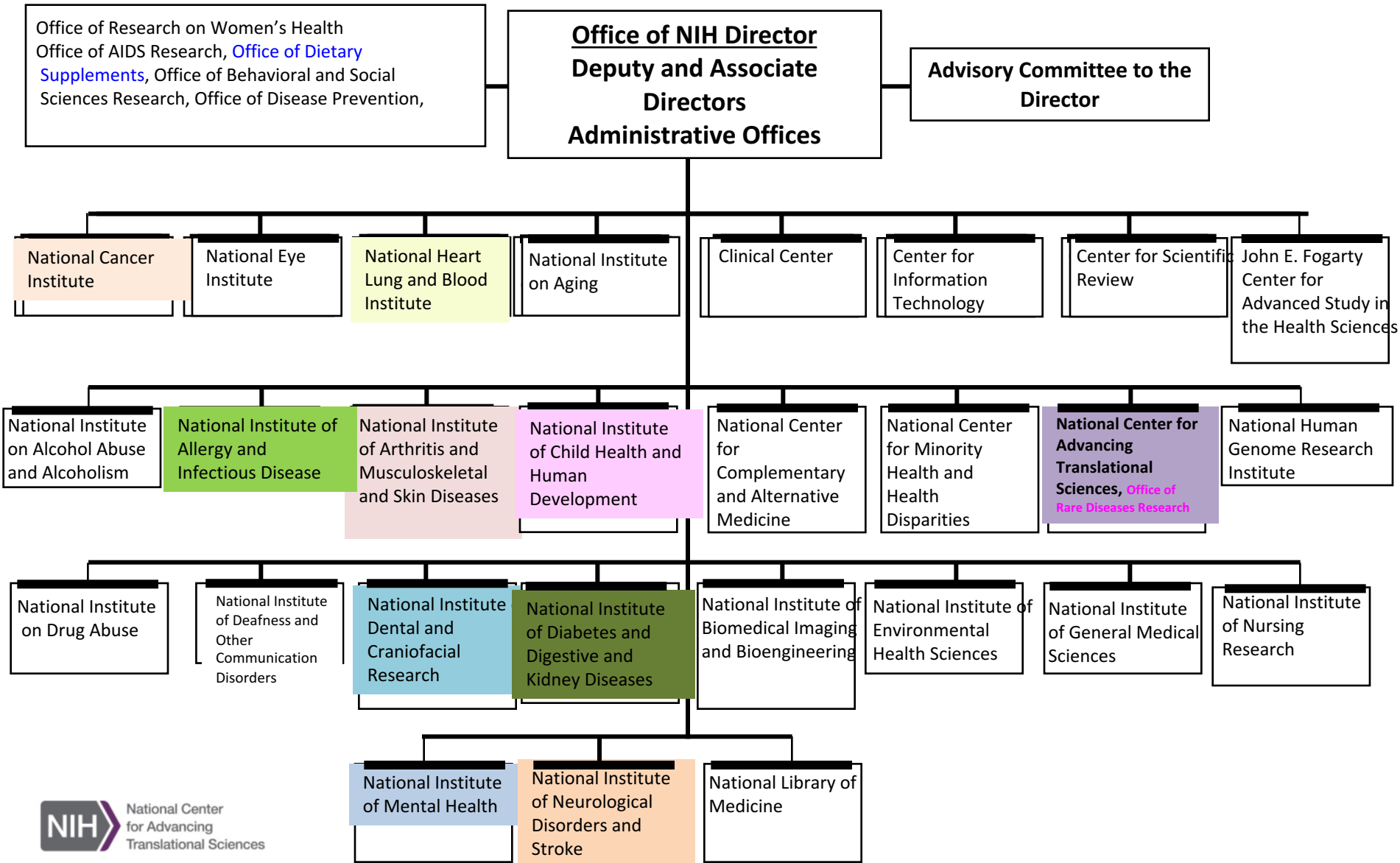
A Working Model for Collaboration and Partnership with Patients and Advocacy Groups to Facilitate Research Efforts



# 1) RDCRN Program: Established by the Office of Rare Diseases Research (ORDR)



# RDCRN Program : Led by NCATS (ORDR), Collaboration with 10 NIH Institutes



# RDCRN Program: Background Information

- Established (in 2003 by ORDR) in response to a Request for Application (RFA). Ten consortia a central Data Management and Coordinating Center (DMCC)
- Expanded in 2009 to 17 consortia and a DMCC (Reissuance of RFA)
- Each RDCRN Consortium : multiple diseases/ investigators / sites, collaborative clinical research Involving Patient Advocacy Groups (PAGs) as research partners

# RDCRN Program: Background Information

- *These are cooperative agreement (U54) awards for 5 years.* Scientific collaborators (project scientists) from ORDR, NCATS and NIH Institutes/Centers (ICs)
- Each awardee (Consortium) receives no more than \$1.25 M Total Cost/year for multi site studies
- RDCRN 3rd cycle (Renewed - 2014), an ORDR, NCATS Initiative

22 distinct multi-site Consortia and a DMCC

**A Network of Networks!**

# Goals of the RDCRN Program

- Facilitate clinical research by:
  - Creating multi-site Consortia focused on a group of at least three related diseases
  - Making meaningful large-scale clinical studies possible
    - Longitudinal studies, Clinical Trials, Natural History Studies are required
    - Establishing uniform protocols for data collection
    - Cost sharing infrastructure
- Collaborate with patients advocacy groups (as research partners), DMCC and NIH scientific staff
- Train new investigators
- Support Pilot Projects Program
- Provide Website resource for education and research in rare diseases

## *Requirements*

# About RDCRN Program

- Collectively, the RDCRN is studying 200 rare diseases in natural history and clinical trials at 418 active clinical sites located in the US and in 24 countries.
- There are more than 90 active protocols.
- 41,519 patients have enrolled in clinical studies.
- There have been 265 trainees.
- There are 3,545 collaborative consortium members.
- There are 144 PAGs as research partners, collectively formed a Coalition (RDCRN-CPAG).

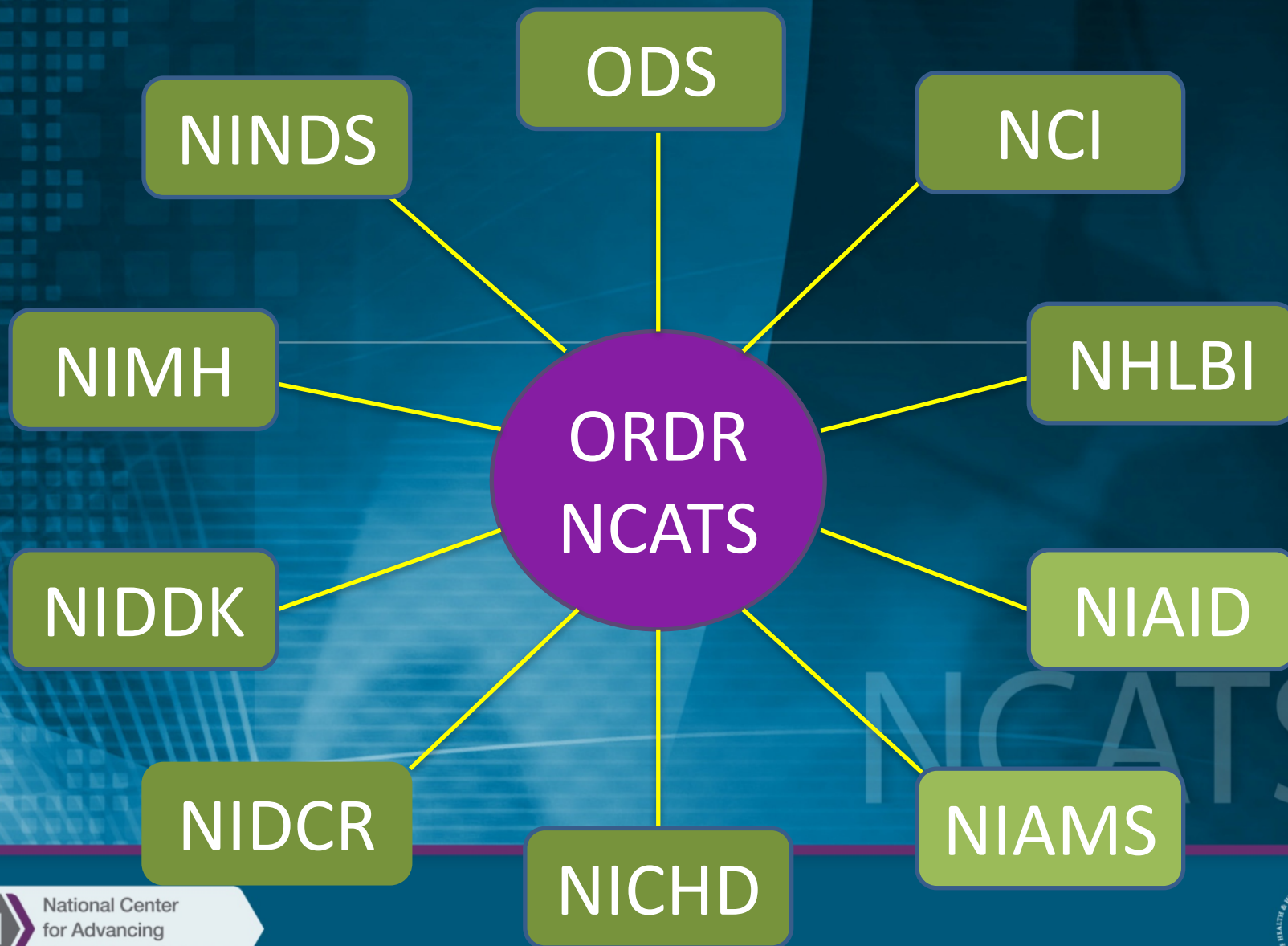
<http://rarediseasesnetwork.epi.usf.edu/>



# RDCRN Program: Special Features

- *The RDCRN is unique in its approach to addressing rare diseases as a group.* Each consortium studies a group of *minimum three related rare diseases.*
- The *direct involvement of PAGs as research partners* is a major feature and requirement of this network.
- NCATS (ORDR program)—Collaboration with 10 NIH ICs
  - Cooperative Agreement *Awards managed by collaborating NIH IC (culture change)*

# RDCRN Program at NCATS



# ORDR/NCATS

(NCI, NHLBI, NIAID, NIAMS, NICHD, NIDCR, NIDDK, NIMH, NINDS, ODS)

**Dystonia Coalition**

**Coalition of Patient Advocacy Groups (CPAG)**

**Porphyria Rare Disease Clinical Research Consortium**

PAG

**North America Mitochondrial Diseases Consortium**

**Primary Immune Deficiency Treatment Consortium**

**Brittle Bone Disorders Consortium**

**Chronic Graft Versus Host Disease**

**The Data Management and Coordinating Center**

**Urea Cycle Disorders Consortium**

**Brain Vascular Malformation Consortium**

**Genetic Disorders of Mucociliary Clearance**

**Consortium of Eosinophilic Gastrointestinal Disease Researchers**

**Rett, MECP2 Duplications and Rett-Related Disorders Consortium**

**Sterol and Isoprenoid Diseases Consortium**

**Autonomic Disorders Consortium**

**Developmental Synaptopathies Associated with TSC, PTEN And SHANK3 Mutations**

**The Frontotemporal Lobar Degeneration Clinical Research Consortium**

**Inherited Neuropathies Consortium**

**Nephrotic Syndrome Study Network**

**Rare Lung Diseases Consortium**

**Lysosomal Disease Network**

**Rare Kidney Stone Consortium**

**Vasculitis Clinical Research Consortium**

**Clinical Research in ALS & Related Disorders for Therapeutic Development**

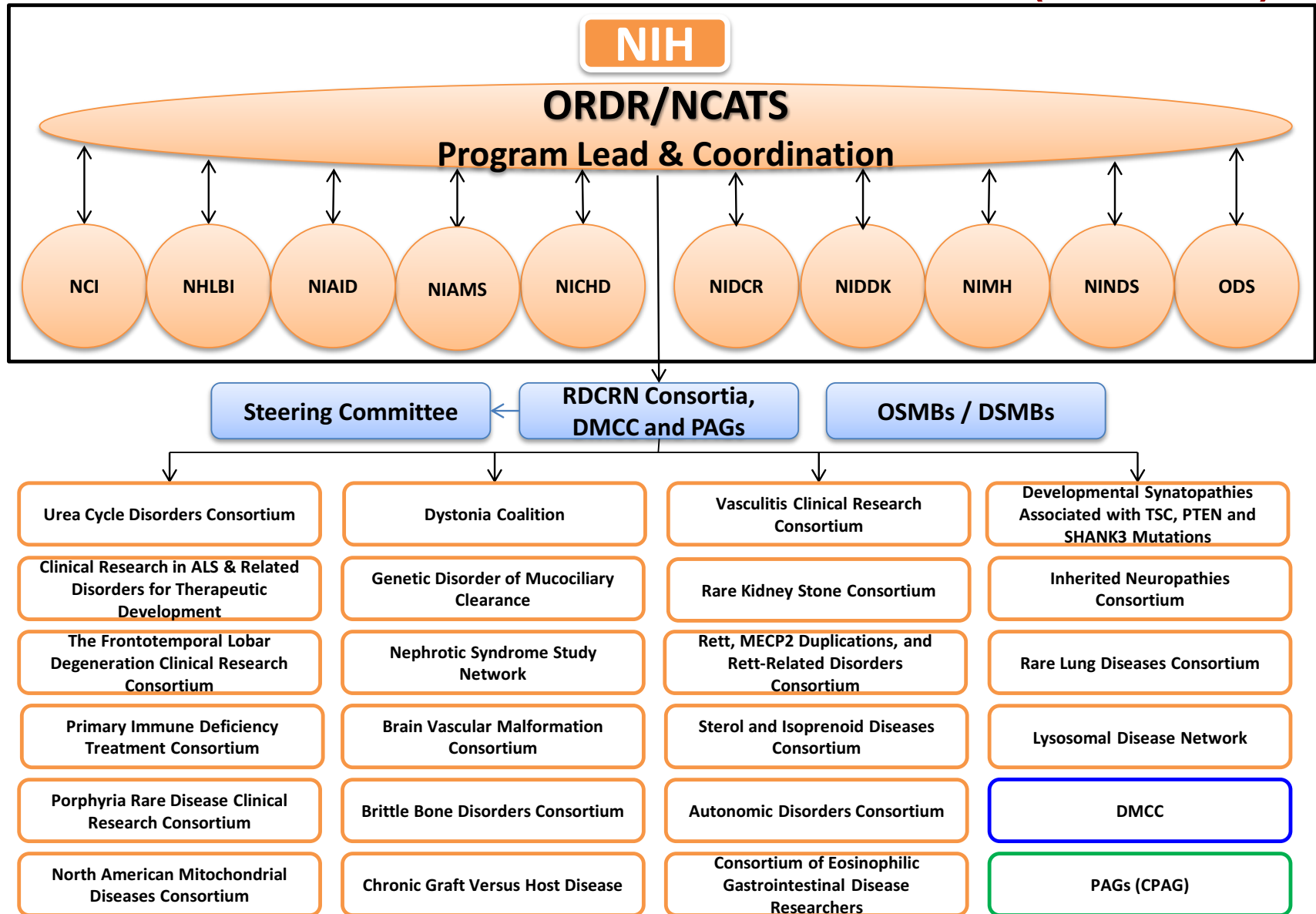


- Collaborative Clinical Research
- Centralized Data Coordination and Technology Development
- Public Resources and Education
- Training

# RDCRN Protocols

Type of Study	Number of Protocols
Pilot	23
Longitudinal	91
Phase I	6
Phase II	18
Phase III	3
Cross Sectional	7
Industry Sponsored	12
Case Control	6
Chart Review	4

# Rare Disease Clinical Research Network 3 (RDCRN 3)



## (RDCRN-CPAG)

A model of community engagement to facilitate clinical research

*A unique feature of the RDCRN is the **direct engagement** of the rare disease patient community through **PAGs working as research partners with individual consortium** of RDCRN, and collectively as the **Coalition Patient Advocacy Groups (CPAG)** comprised of all PAGs of RDCRN.*

The importance of PAGs looking on the issues not just specific to their diseases of interest but across rare diseases.



# Value of PAGs as Research Partners

*Since 2004 PAGs within RDCRN are involved in more than one of the following roles as research partners-*

- Recruit patients for clinical studies, encourage participation in NHS
- Identify cohorts of patients with range of phenotypic expression
- Educate patients, public, media and health care providers
- Identify research efforts and translate research results to communities

# Value of PAGs as Research Partners

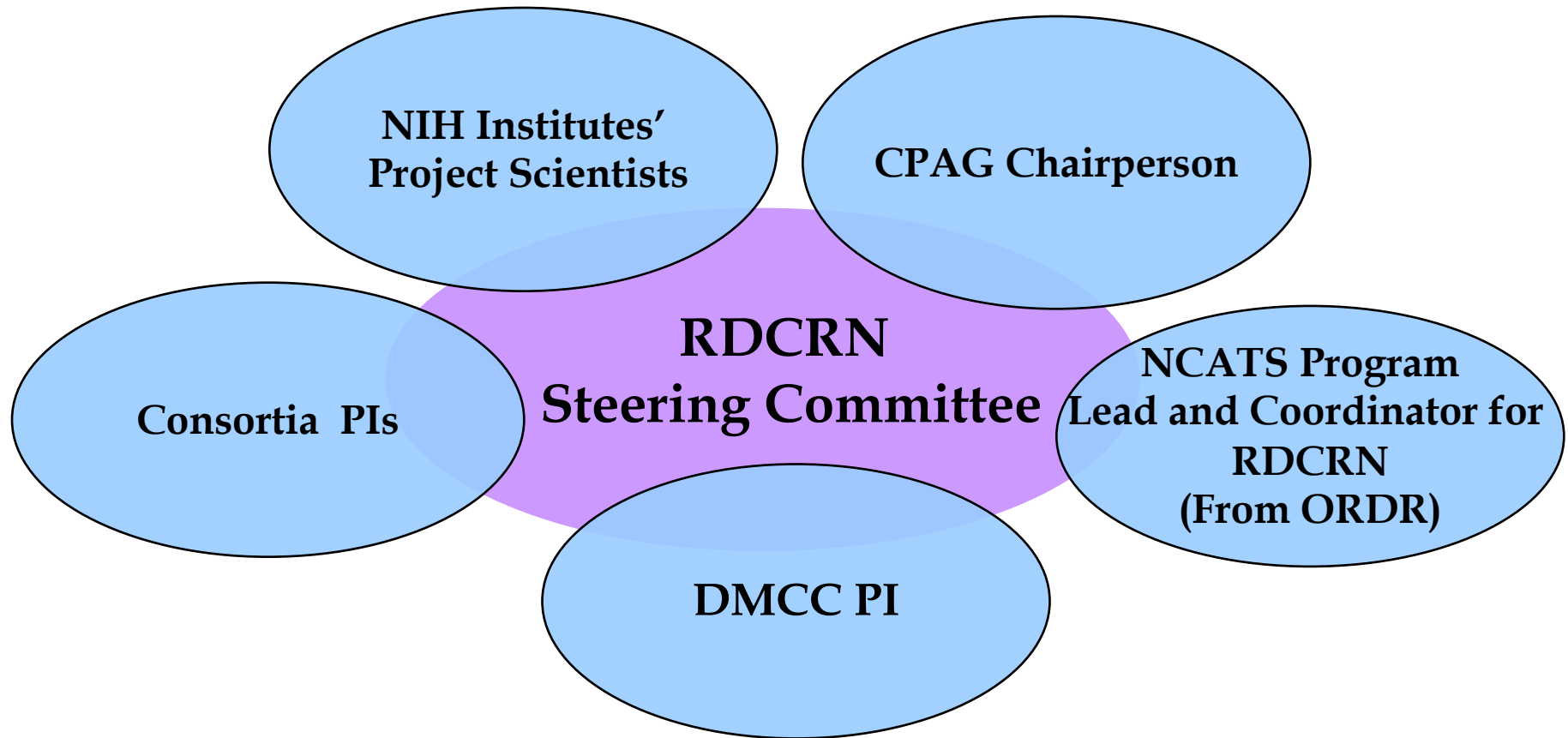
- Organize and fund research based Scientific conferences and meetings for patients/families/caregivers
- Provide financial support for research and training programs of RDCRN (consortia) and patient registries
- Provide financial support for *travel clinics* to facilitate patient access to investigators and studies
- Establish global partnership

# RDCRN International Sites

- Argentina
- Australia
- Austria
- Belgium
- Brazil
- Canada
- China
- Denmark
- England
- France
- Germany
- Iceland
- Ireland
- Israel
- Italy
- Japan
- Korea
- Mexico
- Netherlands
- Russia
- Scotland
- Spain
- *Switzerland*
- Turkey

# RDCRN Steering Committee Organization

*(Review, facilitate and establish all Network procedures and functions)*



# RDCRN PAGs and Principal Investigators Manuscript

“The Partnership of Patient Advocacy Groups and Clinical Investigators in the Rare Diseases Clinical Research Network” has been published in Orphanet Journal of Rare Diseases.

*[Ojrd.biomedcentral.com](http://Ojrd.biomedcentral.com) (May 18<sup>th</sup>, 2016)*

# Constant Communication for Collaboration!

- Monthly RDCRN Steering Committee calls, two in person meetings in Washington DC area (*CPAG chair*)
- Monthly meeting with NIH Institutes~50 medical officer and program officers
- Biweekly meetings with RDCRN-DMCC
- Quarterly calls with *RDCRN-CPAG*, in person
- Individual RDCRN-Consortium calls with *PAG's participation*



# RDCRN-Data Management and Coordinating Center (DMCC)

- Supports RDCRN by providing technologies, tools to collect clinical research data and support for study design and data analysis
- On-line protocol management system
  - Web-based patient enrollment (recruitment and referral)
  - Data entry and collection with data standards
  - Adverse event reporting
- Provides protocol training for research staff

## Responsibilities of RDCRN-DMCC (Cont.)

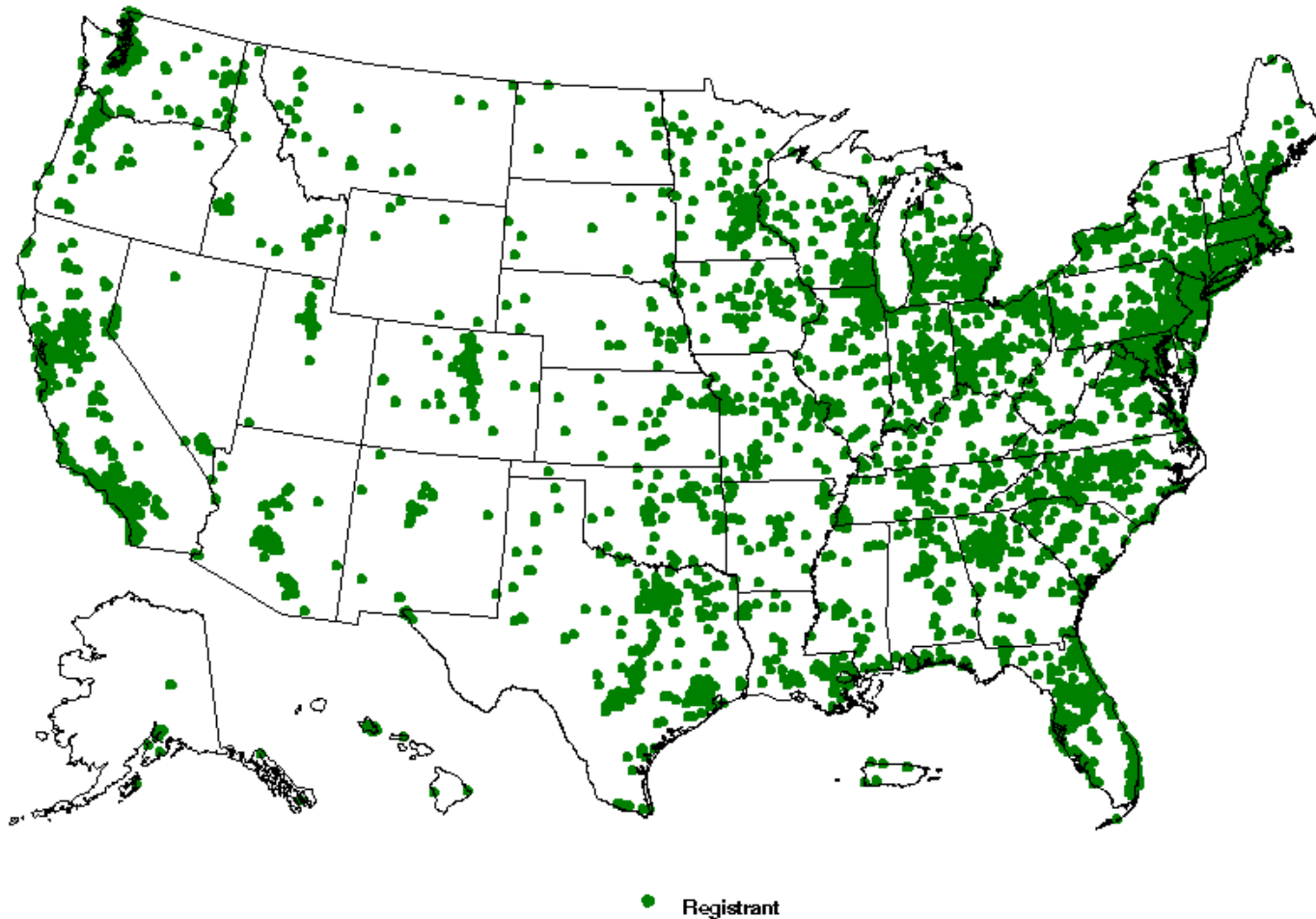
- Works with the individual NIH Institutes' Data and Safety Monitoring Boards to establish protocols for Adverse Events notification and reporting
- Monitor Network protocol adherence, data collection and data submission
- Coordinates site visits for auditing individual consortia sites

## Responsibilities of RDCRN DMCC (Cont.)

- Provides a user-friendly web resource site for the public, research scientists, and clinicians; *involvement of PAGs* (>2 million hits/year)
- Maintain members' website, documentation and database
- *Oversees and maintains RDCRN Patient Contact Registry*

# RDCRN Contact Registry (2004)

## (U.S. Geographic Distribution of Contact Registrants)

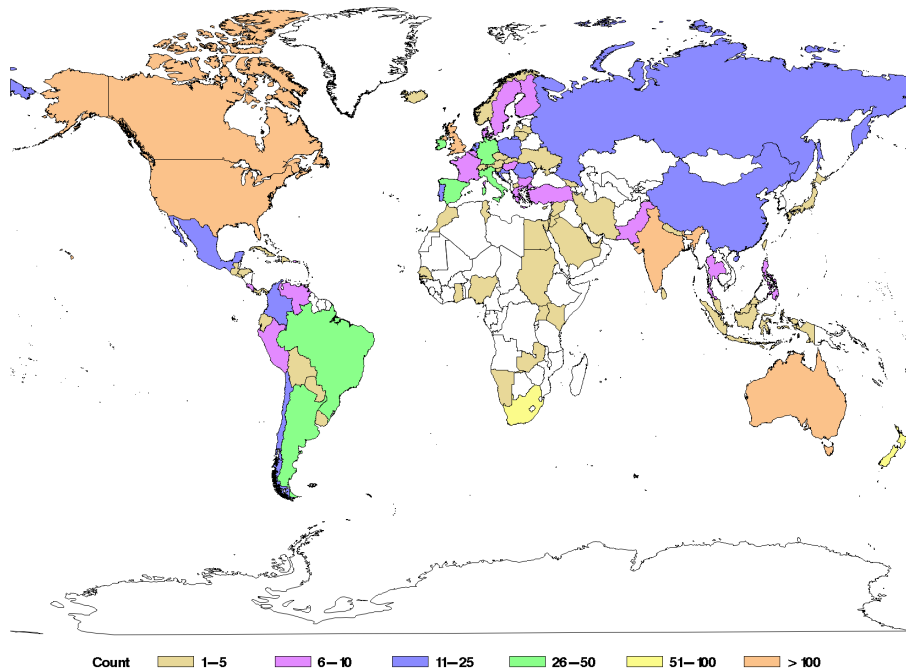


- Enrollment open to patients with diseases under study by Consortia

- Provides international on-line system for communication, recruitment, research

# RDCRN Contact Registry Overview

Data as of October 29<sup>th</sup>, 2016



- 213 diseases represented
- 116 countries
- 19,144 total registrations
- 38% referred from PAGs
- 38% from internet
- 7% referred from med. prof.
- 260,000+ email communications

## Goals:

To inform registrants about RDCRN studies available;

To disseminate information about RDCRN activities

# Data Sharing (RDCRN Data Repository)

- The RDCRN-DMCC also coordinates with ORDR program staff including registration with and data uploading of appropriate RDCRN studies to ORDR-governed data repository
- Through dbGaP, a database for genotypes and phenotypes (NCBI, National Library of Medicine)
- Data transfer to dbGaP occurs on regular basis
- RDCRN Data Access Committee (DAC)

# Partnering for Success

**Patient  
Groups**

**Academics**

**Industry**

**Government  
(in US: NIH,  
FDA)**



# **An Example of Collaboration/Scientific Advancements: The Urea Cycle Disorders Consortia at Children's National Medical Center**

- 19 Academic Research Centers in USA and 2 International Sites
- Collaborators With European Registry And Network For Intoxication Type Metabolic Disorders (EIMD)
- Industry Partnerships - 3 Products Approved
  - Ucyclyd Pharma: Ammonul
  - Recordati: Carbaglu
  - Hyperion: Ravicti
- Patient Advocacy Group - The National Urea Cycle Disorders Foundation
- Foundations - O'Malley Family Foundation, Kettering Fund, Rotenberg Family Foundation, and Dietmar-Hopp Foundation
- ORDR/NCATS and NICHD (from NIH), providing support and scientific collaboration



# Another Example: RDCRN-Rare Lung Diseases Consortium (RLDC)

- In early 2015 FDA accepted for priority review a supplemental New Drug Application for (sNDA) RAPAMUNE® for the treatment of lymphangioleiomyomatosis (LAM)
- LAM is a rare, progressive lung disease that primarily affects women of childbearing age that is often fatal. (March/2015 FDA approval)
- *This is the first drug approved for the treatment of LAM!*
- This is an accomplishment of the Multicenter International LAM Efficacy and Safety of Sirolimus (MILES) Trial (conducted by Dr. Francis McCormack of RDCRN RLDC in collaboration with LAM Foundation). The sNDA was based on results from the MILES Trial. (Wyeth)
  - *Collaborative effort!*

# Genetic Disorders of Mucociliary Clearance Consortium & Primary Ciliary Diskinesia (PCD) Foundation

- Diagnosis, monitoring, and treatment of primary ciliary dyskinesia: PCD foundation consensus recommendations based on state of the art review.
- Pediatric Pulmonology. September 29, 2015
- Shapiro AJ, Zariwala MA, Ferkol T, Davis SD, Sagel SD, Dell SD, Rosenfeld M, Olivier KN, Milla C, Daniel SJ, Kimple AJ, Manion M, Knowles MR, Leigh MW

# Through the RDCRN program.....

- New diagnostic methods have been generated
- New gene identification has been facilitated and
- New therapies have been identified.

by creating *collaborative multidisciplinary, multi-site research consortia* consisting of PAGs, academic researchers from domestic and international sites and project scientists from NCATS & NIH ICs as collaborators, the program has demonstrated that collaborative effort can accelerate clinical research.

# Team Work!

- Clinical Sites
- Principal and co-investigators and the DMCC (multidisciplinary group)
- Trainees
- Study Coordinators
- *Patient Advocacy Groups (PAGs)*
- Pharmaceutical industry
- ORDR/NCATS and NIH Institutes staff (program officers and project scientists)
- *Patients*

**RDCRN: Working model for collaborative, multi-site clinical studies with PAGs partnership in an inexpensive way!**

**RDCRN consists of 418 sites, 144 PAGs and conducts research on more than 200 rare diseases**

# T. E. A. M.



# ***RDCRN: An Effective and Working Model for Collaborative Multi-Site Rare Diseases Research Efforts***



# RDCRN Website

<https://www.rarediseasesnetwork.org/>

# RDCRN Homepage

For Patients  
and  
Families



## Find Patient Advocacy Groups

The Coalition of Patient Advocacy Groups (CPAG) represents the perspective and interests of all patient advocacy organizations associated with the diseases we study.

 **Stay Connected -  
Join the Contact  
Registry**

For  
Healthcare  
Professionals



## Training Opportunities

## Other Rare Disease Initiatives

About Us



## What is the RDCRN?

Aims of the Rare Diseases Clinical  
Research Network

**Contact Us**



## 2) NCATS Genetic and Rare Diseases Information Center (GARD)

<https://rarediseases.info.nih.gov>

The screenshot displays the GARD website with a top navigation bar containing 'Diseases', 'Resources', 'Research', 'News & Events', and 'About GARD'. The 'Resources' tab is active. Below the navigation bar, there's a large banner with a woman wearing a headset and the text 'Have Questions About Genetic or Rare Diseases?'. To the right of the banner is a search bar with the text 'Search for a condition' and a 'Go' button. Below the search bar is a 'Browse Diseases' section with a grid of letters A through Z and a '0-9' button. The main content area is divided into three columns: 'About GARD', 'Research', and 'Resources'. The 'About GARD' section describes the center's mission and provides a link to 'Read more about GARD'. The 'Research' section lists various NIH-supported research efforts, including the Rare Diseases Clinical Research Network (RDCRN), the NIH/NCATS GRDR Program, the Global Rare Diseases Patient Registry Data Repository, Therapeutics for Rare and Neglected Diseases (TRND), the Undiagnosed Diseases Network (UDN), and Bench-to-Bedside Awards. The 'Resources' section features a 'Featured Guide' titled 'How to Find a Disease Specialist' and three resource boxes: 'Rare Diseases Resources', 'Genetics Resources', and 'Genetic Testing and Treatment'. At the bottom, there's a 'Your Questions Answered' section and a 'Support for Patients' link.

Online resource with:

- **Up-to-date, reliable and easy-to-understand information** on rare or genetic diseases
- Partnering with **Orphanet**
- In **English or Spanish**
- For **people with rare or genetic diseases**, their families, friends, care providers and wider communities
- **Contact information** for telephone and email queries

# In addition.....

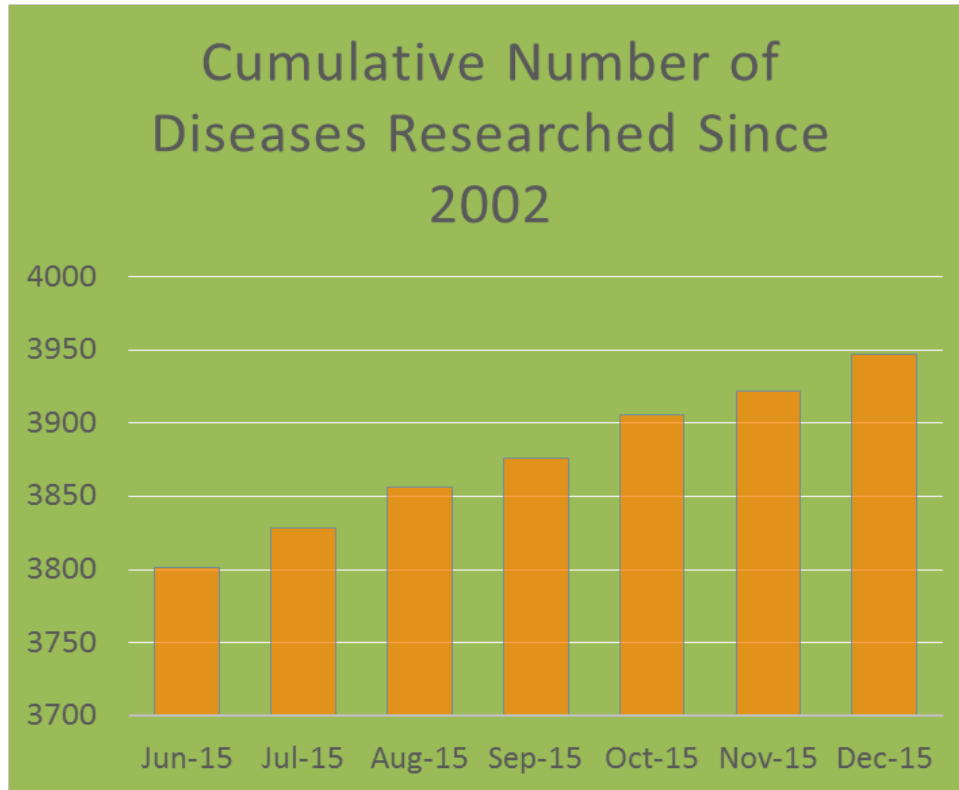
## **Specialized information specialist staff**

- Genetic counselors and clinical geneticist
- Services in English or Spanish

## **Medical advisors**

- Cytogeneticist/molecular geneticist consultant
- Medical consultant for referrals (retired NIH expert)
- Medical geneticist, NIH consultant from NIGMS

# INQUIRY STATISTICS



- Answered more than 55,000 questions
- Receive approximately 400 - 500 inquiries/month
- 77% from the United States; 13% International
- 3% of inquiries are in Spanish

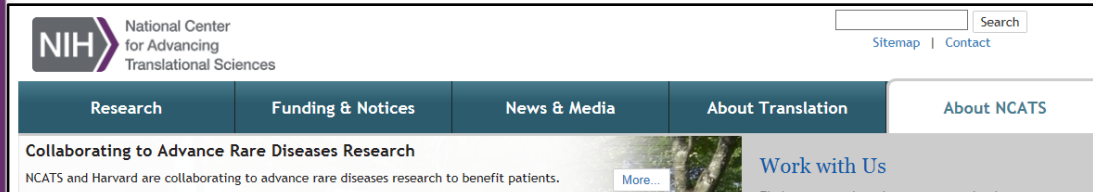
than 4000 diseases

Answered questions on more

### 3) Scientific Conferences Program

- Identify Research Opportunities
- Establish Research Priorities
- Develop Research Agenda  
(R13/U13 grant applications)
- ORDR can provide funding  
(1200 conferences supported)
- Webcast of many conference available

# 4) NIH/NCATS Global Rare Diseases Registry (GRDR®) Program



- Common Data Elements (CDEs) for collecting data
- Informed consent templates
- Access to GRDR Global Unique Identifier (GUID)
- Map patient data to GRDR CDEs & national standards
- Information and tools



# Translational Research Program and Resources at NCATS, NIH

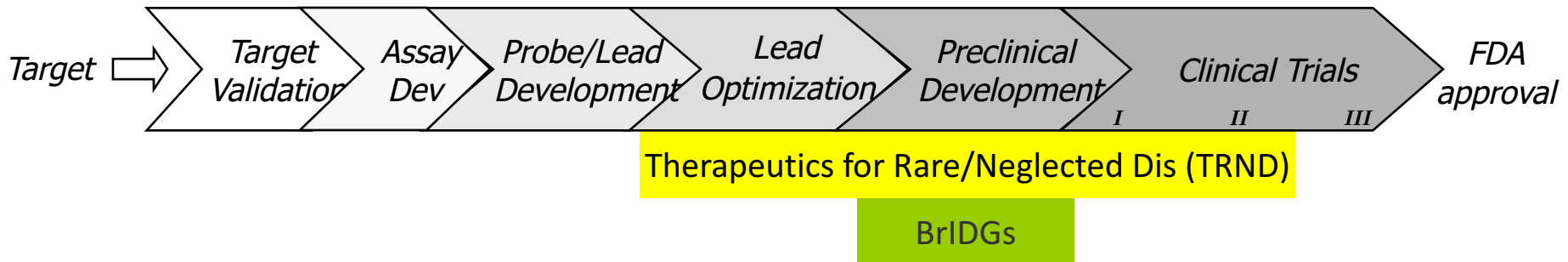
# NCATS Scientific Initiatives

- **Preclinical Translational Science**
  - NCATS Chemical Genomics Center
  - *Therapeutics for Rare and Neglected Diseases program (TRND)*
  - *Bridging Interventional Development Gaps program (BriDGs)*
- **Clinical Translational Science**
  - *Clinical and Translational Science Awards*
  - *Rare Disease Clinical Research Network program*
  - *New Therapeutic Uses program*
- **Re-engineering Translational Sciences**
  - Toxicology in the 21st Century
  - *Microphysiological Systems (Tissue Chip) program*

# NCATS Therapeutics Development Programs

*Therapeutics for Rare and Neglected Diseases (TRND)*

*Bridging Interventional Development Gaps (BrIDGs)*



**Model:** Collaboration between NCATS labs with preclinical drug development expertise and external organizations with disease area/target expertise

## **Projects:**

Disease must meet FDA Orphan or WHO NTD criteria

Entry from Probe to IND-enabling

Exit by adoption by external organization for completion of clinical development

Serve to develop new generally applicable platform technologies and paradigms

## **Eligible Collaborators:**

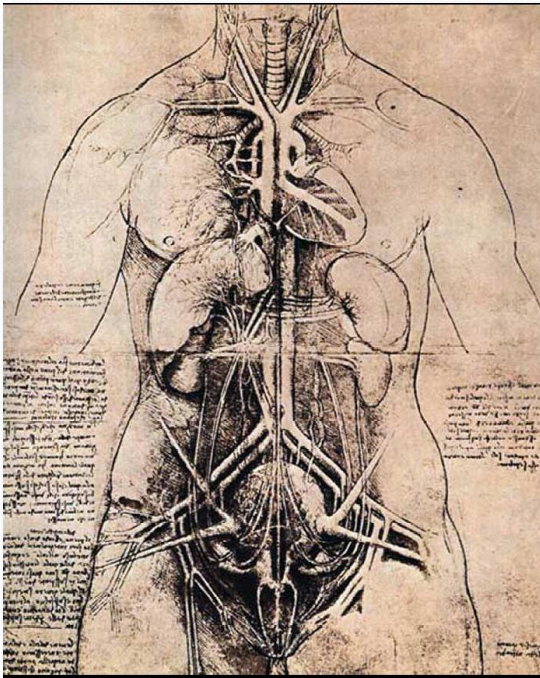
Academic, Non-Profit, Government Lab, Biotech, Pharma

International applications accepted



# Tissue Chip for Drug Screening Program

GOAL: Develop an *in vitro* platform that uses human tissues to evaluate the efficacy, safety and toxicity of promising therapies.



- All ten human physiological systems will be functionally represented by human tissue constructs:
  - Circulatory
  - Endocrine
  - Gastrointestinal
  - Immune
  - Integumentary
  - Musculoskeletal
  - Nervous
  - Reproductive
  - Respiratory
  - Urinary
- Physiologically relevant, genetically diverse, and pathologically meaningful
- Modular, reconfigurable platform
- Tissue viability for at least 4 weeks
- Community-wide access

# **NEW** Tissue Chip for Drug Screening Program Funding Opportunity (Disease Modeling and Efficacy Testing Initiative)

- Goal: to create rare disease models that replicate pathology and other in vivo-like responses for testing effectiveness of candidate drugs
- Application receipt date (December 13<sup>th</sup>, 2016).
- [RFA-TR-16-017](#). For questions contact Dan Tagle (NCATS)

# **NEW** Tissue Chip for Drug Screening Program:

- Collaboration with Center for Advancement of Science in Space (CASIS)
- Purpose: to use tissue chip technology (leverage advances) at International Space Station, US, National Laboratory.
- Application receipt date (December 15<sup>th</sup>, 2016)
- [RFA-TR-16-019](#).

# ***Update* Clinical Trials to Repurpose Drugs in Collaboration with E-Rare-3**

- NCATS provide support for phase 1 and/or 2 clinical trial sites that will test the potential use of an existing molecule for the treatment of a rare disease as part of a multi-site international “E-Rare-3” trial.
- The [ERA-NET “E-Rare”](#) is coordinating research efforts of European countries in the field of rare diseases.
- Note: Collaboration with NCATS New Therapeutic Uses (NTU program)

# Learn More About NCATS



**Website:** [www.ncats.nih.gov](http://www.ncats.nih.gov)



**Facebook:** [facebook.com/ncats.nih.gov](https://facebook.com/ncats.nih.gov)



**Twitter:** [twitter.com/ncats\\_nih\\_gov](https://twitter.com/ncats_nih_gov)



**YouTube:** [youtube.com/user/ncatsmedia](https://youtube.com/user/ncatsmedia)



**E-Newsletter:** [ncats.nih.gov/news-and-events/e-news/e-news.html](http://ncats.nih.gov/news-and-events/e-news/e-news.html)

**Email us!** [info@ncats.nih.gov](mailto:info@ncats.nih.gov)

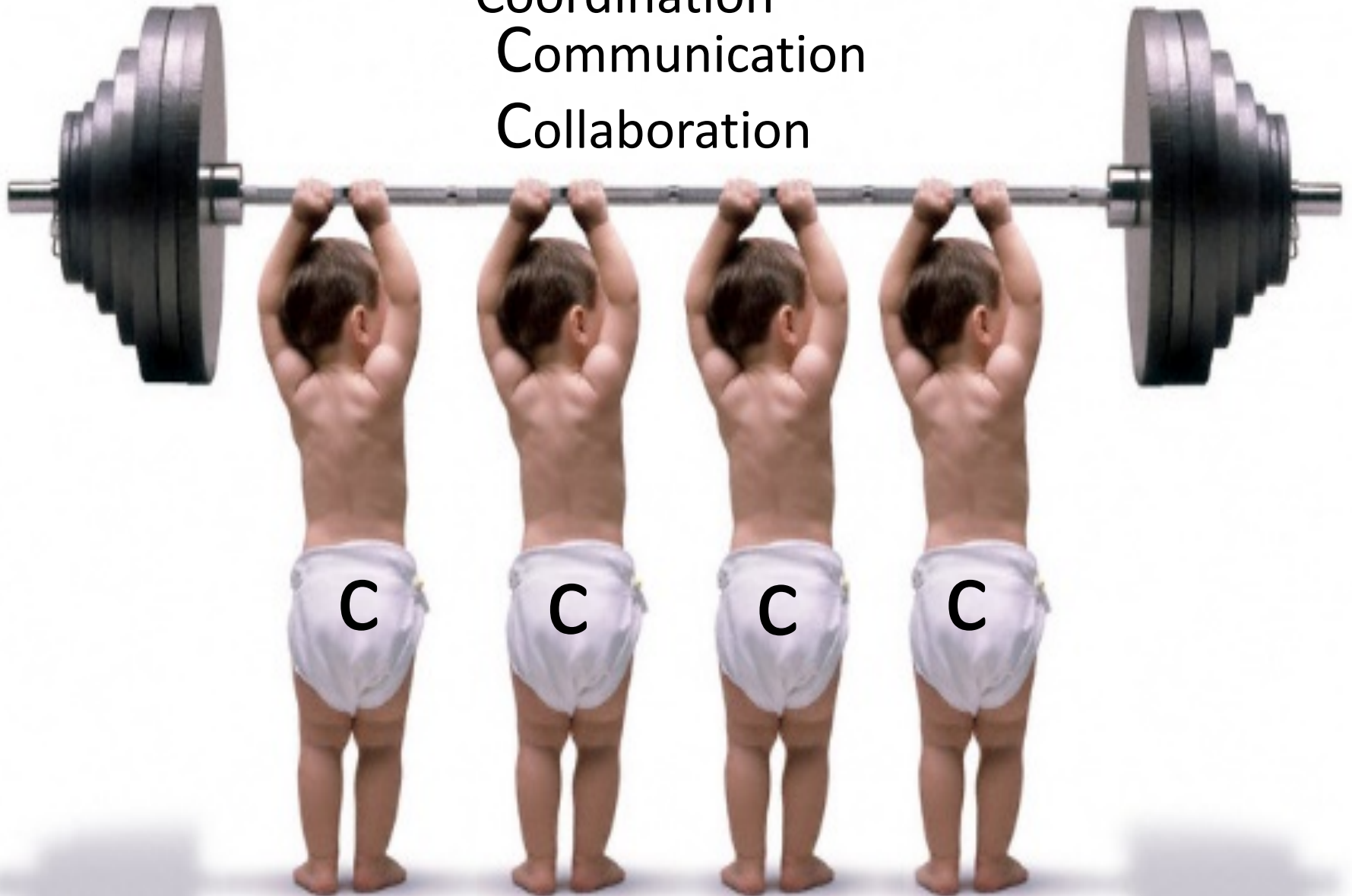




# DETERMINATION



Coordination  
Communication  
Collaboration



CURES

# Thanks for your attention!

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# NCATS