

To: Members of the Study Section

Your upcoming review meeting includes application(s) submitted via the Competitive Grant Application Process (CGAP), i.e. electronic submission. The NIH is developing electronic research administration (eRA) as a means of improving the grants process and shortening the time from submission to award. At this time the NIH is in the pilot phase of the implementation of this system. We are grateful that some investigators have volunteered to be “pioneers” in the early stages of this process.

The Center for Scientific Review is committed to making sure that CGAP applications are neither advantaged nor disadvantaged in this process. We have made paper copies of the electronic submission for the assigned reviewers and readers. Appendix material is provided in the usual manner. You will notice that some aspects of both the paper application and electronic image differ somewhat from applications submitted the traditional way. Certain sections of the application are printed on multiple pages; for example the Description, Performance Sites, and Key Personnel are each on a separate page, rather than being combined on page 2 of the application. The different sections of the Research Plan (Specific Aims, Background and Significance, Preliminary Studies, Research Design and Methods) each begin on a new page; this may make it appear that the Research Plan is slightly longer than 25 pages. These cosmetic differences should not influence your review of the application in any way. You may notice that the quality of the image on the CD provided is somewhat improved over the scanned images of paper applications. Figures and graphs will retain color as initially presented.

As always, please concentrate on evaluating the scientific and technical merit of each application, providing NIH with the benefits of your expertise and best judgment. As NIH moves to increase the use of electronic submission, it is likely that reviewers will be seeing a greater variety of formats of applications during the transition process. Again, please do not let these superficial differences interfere with your evaluation of the merit of these applications.

The NIH has devoted many resources to the development and testing of the CGAP system. We have incorporated many checks and business rules that will prevent applicants from making the common mistakes that can lead to problems in grant submission or delays in review. Our expectation is that this process will result in applications that will consistently meet all of the NIH requirements and allow investigators to concentrate on the scientific aspects. If you are interested in submitting an application via CGAP, please contact the Office of Sponsored Research at your institution. Further information can also be found at the following site: <http://era.nih.gov/>.

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