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Sent by Email: NICHDSstrategicPlan@nih.gov

NICHD Strategic Plan
NIH
9000 Rockville Pike
Bethesda, Maryland 20892

**Re: Request for Information
NICHD Strategic Plan Fiscal Years 2020-2024**

Dear National Institute of Child Health and Human Development:

I represent the non-profit organization Having Kids, which is dedicated to promoting smaller, sustainable, and more equitable families so that we can invest more in each child brought into this world. Toward that end, Having Kids is focused on viable ways to reduce the human population and especially unwanted pregnancies.

Having Kids believes that in light of the world's current population increasing at the rate of 80 million persons a year, and projected to exceed 9 billion by 2050, it is imperative that NIH make research and funding for development of male contraception an extremely high priority over the next five years. Approximately half of all pregnancies are unplanned, with the socioeconomic costs of unintended pregnancy in the United States alone estimated at approximately \$15 billion. Khourdaji, I, et al., "The future of male contraception: a fertile ground," *Transl Androl. Urol.*, Vol. 7 at S220-235 (2018). According to experts, the rapid rate of population growth and astounding number of unintended pregnancies are at least partly attributable to a lack of access to adequate contraception. *Ibid.*

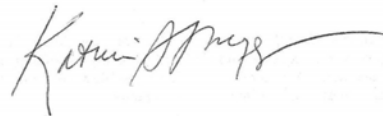
Currently, NICHD spends approximately \$20 - \$24 million each year on contraception research generally, with those resources being evenly split. Having Kids believes that because female contraceptive products are already widely available and used, more resources need to be spent on the development of male contraception products, including both hormonal and non-hormonal drugs and devices. Indeed, clinical trials investigating the use of androgens and androgen-progestin combinations for use in male contraception have begun to show promise. However, much more needs to be done to insure that such products are both safe and effective and that they actually reach the marketplace. NICHD can play a crucial role in making this a reality.

For example, organizations such as the Population Council and private foundations have funded research on male contraception, but simply cannot afford the large, phase-3 clinical trials required by the Food and Drug Administration to garner federal drug and device approval under the Food, Drug, and Cosmetic Act. NICHD can assist in this regard by requesting additional appropriations for such research and insuring that such funding, as well as current funding, is allocated to this much needed clinical research. Indeed, even if NIH were to fund more phase 1 and phase 2 trials, this could provide the pharmaceutical industry with more confidence to undertake the phase 3 trials, as noted by Dr. David Johnson, Chief of NICHD's Contraceptive Research Branch. Funding this research and partnering with pharmaceutical companies to insure that the new drug and device applications are actually taken to the FDA for approval is essential.

Research shows that couples are anxious and willing to pursue male contraception as a viable alternative to what is currently on the market. Development of a safe and effective male contraceptive drug or device would go a long way to evening out the financial, emotional, and physical burdens now placed almost exclusively on women to prevent unwanted pregnancies, and would greatly advance the vital cause of promoting sustainable families for the future.

Having Kids cannot stress enough how important it is for NICHD to make this issue the highest priority for the coming years. Having Kids stands ready to assist the agency in any way possible toward this important objective.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Katherine A. Meyer", with a long, sweeping horizontal line extending to the right.

Katherine A. Meyer