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Release: NICHD appoints Alison Cernich, a leader in medical rehabilitation research, as deputy director

Posted on behalf of the *Eunice Kennedy Shriver* National Institute of Child Health and Human Development (NICHD)



Credit: National Institutes of Health

After a nationwide search, Alison Cernich, Ph.D., has been selected as deputy director of the *Eunice Kennedy Shriver* National Institute of Child Health and Human Development (NICHD), part of the National Institutes of Health. Since 2015, Dr. Cernich has served as the director of NICHD's National Center for Medical

Rehabilitation Research (NCMRR).

“Dr. Cernich is a national leader in rehabilitation medicine who has worked with multiple federal agencies to coordinate and optimize research resources in this field,” said Diana W. Bianchi, M.D., NICHD director. “She brings to her new position broad experience in research program development and portfolio management.”

As NCMRR Director, Dr. Cernich oversaw a $72 million research portfolio aimed at improving the health and wellbeing of people with disabilities. Shortly after joining NICHD, she led the development of the congressionally mandated NIH Rehabilitation Research Plan, an effort requiring coordination with multiple NIH institutes and outreach to the disability community and several professional organizations. The five-year plan established priorities to guide NIH support for rehabilitation medicine and to benefit people with temporary or chronic limitations in physical, cognitive or sensory function.

A board-certified neuropsychologist with expertise in cognitive neuroscience, Dr. Cernich joined NICHD from the Defense Centers of Excellence for Psychological Health and Traumatic Brain Injury at the Department of Veterans Affairs, where she served as deputy director. In that capacity, she was the senior liaison to the Department of Defense on psychological health and traumatic brain injury and provided oversight and supervision of the center’s research portfolio.

More recently, Dr. Cernich has been instrumental in the revision of NICHD’s Strategic Plan, an effort to identify scientific themes, goals, and opportunities to guide its research over the next five years. She has also represented NICHD on large trans-NIH initiatives, including the *All of Us* Program and the HEAL (Helping to End Addiction Long-termSM) Initiative.

Dr. Cernich will assist the NICHD Director in overseeing the institute’s research programs in biological, behavioral and clinical research related to conception and pregnancy, typical and atypical development in childhood, reproductive health and medical rehabilitation.

Read the original release

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About the *Eunice Kennedy Shriver* National Institute of Child Health and Human Development (NICHD): NICHD leads research and training to understand human development, improve reproductive health, enhance the lives of children and adolescents, and optimize abilities for all. For more information, visit http://www.nichd.nih.gov.

About the National Institutes of Health (NIH): NIH, the nation's medical research agency, includes 27 Institutes and Centers and is a component of the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services. NIH is the primary federal agency conducting and supporting basic, clinical, and translational medical research, and is investigating the causes, treatments, and cures for both common and rare diseases. For more information about NIH and its programs, visit http://www.nih.gov

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