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FOREWORD: ATTRIBUTE TO THE WORK OF JHS INVESTIGATORS, THE JACKSON COMMUNITY AND NIH SCIENTISTS

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The National Institute of Biomedical Imaging and Bioengineering is happy to join our sister institutes, National Heart, Lung and Blood Institute (NHLBI) and National Institute on Minority Health and Health Disparities (NIMHD) at the National Institutes of Health (NIH), to participate in this important enterprise for the country. We look forward to the kind of information that is not only coming out, but will come out in the future from the Jackson Heart Study (JHS).

The purpose of the JHS – to explore reasons for cardiovascular health disparities and uncover new approaches to their elimination – parallels that of imaging science itself. Biomedical imaging has an expanding capability to observe, define, delineate and characterize the early pathophysiologic manifestations of heart and other diseases. This subclinical detection is critical to realizing the vision of transforming health care in this century into an endeavor focused on wellness and identification of preclinical indicators of heart disease. With this approach, we will enable detection and intervention at a point in the natural history where maladies are more amenable to non-invasive therapeutic approaches.

The JHS imaging database of thousands of thoracic and abdominal multidetector CT scans, MRI assessment of cardiac and vascular structure and function – all obtained on a community-based sample of African Americans – represents one of the most unique and valuable resources in medical research. The creation of this internationally significant platform for scientific discovery is a tribute to the work of the JHS investigators, the community of Jackson and the mutually supportive work of the NIH scientists.

Imaging has a unique contribution to make to epidemiology and population research, and the NIBIB is particularly pleased to be exploring this frontier of discovery with the Jackson Heart Study.