

NCCAM Comes Under Fire

DIGITAL EXCLUSIVE

In the current tight economic times, it comes as no shock that federally funded programs, including research grants, should come under scrutiny. After all, we pay taxes that support those research grants, and nobody likes to see government waste. Unfortunately, this mindset can easily lead to attacking what appears to be easy targets.

A good example of this is a [recent Associated Press article](#), which has taken the [National Center for Complementary and Alternative Medicine](#) to task for funding what it calls "studies ... that have little if any biological plausibility or scientific evidence." According to the article, NCCAM has spent \$2.5 billion over the last 10 years to study various alternative health treatments, but results have been disappointing.

By way of response to the criticisms, Josephine P. Briggs, NCCAM's director, stated, "The initial studies were driven by some very strong enthusiasms, and now we're learning about how to layer evidence and to do more basic science before testing a particular supplement in a large trial. There are a lot of negative studies in conventional medicine, and the government's outlay is small compared to drug company spending."