

**NIEHS Office of Communications and Public Liaison (OCPL)  
September 2010 – February 2011**

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**I. 2010 YEAR-END HIGHLIGHTS**

- NIEHS/NTP was cited in 7,703 news stories (up from 4,220 in 2009).
- Responded to 510 media requests.
- Arranged 156 media interviews for NIEHS/NTP scientists.
- Responded to more than 1,100 public inquiries.
- Provided tailored media training and writing classes to more than 35 staff.
- Introduced new social media tools — NIEHS now has more than 400 Twitter followers.
- 9.3 million visits to the NIEHS Web site (23% increase from 2009).
- 277,900 visits to the monthly online newsletter, the Environmental Factor (up from 194,000 in 2009).

**II. EVENTS**

**Oil Spill Response Efforts**

OCPL has been working with HHS and other agencies to proactively communicate the NIEHS response to the Deepwater Horizon oil spill in the Gulf of Mexico. Following is a brief summary of NIEHS activities:

- [Safety Training](#) — Within days of the explosion, the NIEHS Worker Education & Training Program facilitated safety training for more than 100,000 cleanup workers.
- [GuLF Study](#) — The NIEHS Epidemiology Branch is heading the NIH GuLF Study on the long-term health effects of the oil spill.
- Toxicology Research — The National Toxicology Program, working together with [federal partners](#), is conducting studies to better understand the chemistry, biological fate, and toxicological effects of crude oil, dispersant components, and breakdown products.
- [Gulf Research Consortia](#) — NIEHS will fund grants for researcher-community partnerships to address the needs of affected communities.
- [Other Grantee Research](#) — The NIEHS grants program currently supports research and outreach efforts on the health effects of exposure to oil and dispersants.

NIEHS has hosted a series of community forums, stakeholder visits, webinars, and instructional meetings throughout the five-state Gulf region, in order to promote awareness, participation, and coordination for all of these programs among local residents, state and local health departments,

regional universities and researchers, and federal agency partners. Some of the ongoing activities that OCPL oversees include:

- Providing regular updates to national press, HHS, and White House.
- Developing and trademarking unique logos for the GuLF Study.
- Establishing a communications plan for the GuLF Study roll out.
- Continuously updating Gulf Oil Response pages on the NIEHS Web site (<http://www.niehs.nih.gov/about/od/programs/gulfspill.cfm>).

The NIEHS webinars and other outreach efforts have resulted in more than 230 media stories (85 since August 2010) related to the Gulf oil spill. Following are some key examples:

- On August 18, 2010, a story in **The Daily Environment Report** entitled “NIEHS to Study Health Effects of Gulf Spill” included quotes by Dale Sandler of DIR and NIEHS/NTP Director Linda Birnbaum. A story entitled “NIH to Study Health After Spill” also appeared in **The Scientist**.
- On August 19, 2010, **The New York Times** and **Greenwire** compiled a story “Locals Track Gulf Oil Spill's Health Impacts, Paving Way for Federal Study,” which included quotes from Dale Sandler. A follow-up story on August 25 in the **New York Times** included quotes from Aubrey Miller of OD.
- On August 19, 2010, **Nature** ran a story “NIH Investigates Health Impacts of Gulf Oil Spill” that included quotes by Dale Sandler.
- On August 23, 2010, **The Pump Handle** story “What Next: Assessing Deepwater Horizon Damages and What We Have Yet to Learn About the Oil Spill’s Impacts” focused on an NIEHS webinar and included quotes from NIEHS participants including Linda Birnbaum.
- On September 7, 2010, NIEHS/NIH issued a press release entitled “[NIH to Launch Gulf Oil Spill Health Study](#).” Several media outlets including **Fox Business**, **Government Executive**, **The Times-Picayune**, **The Advocate**, **All Headline News**, **CNN**, and the **NIH Record** carried stories about the launch of the NIH study. NIEHS and NIH staff were quoted in many of the stories.
- On September 22, 2010, **The St. Petersburg Times** and **Tampa Bay.com** ran a story entitled “Top Scientists Meet in Tampa to Study Health Impacts of Gulf Oil Spill.” Dale Sandler was quoted, as was NIH Director Francis Collins.

### **Fluoride announcement**

The NIEHS Communications director worked closely with agency counterparts at HHS, EPA, and elsewhere to develop and implement a wide-reaching communications plan for the new HHS recommendation on water fluoridation. HHS’ proposed recommendation of 0.7 milligrams of fluoride per liter of water replaces the current recommended range of 0.7 to 1.2 milligrams. On January 7, 2011, a press release and supplemental materials were disseminated and placed on NIEHS and other HHS Web sites <http://www.hhs.gov/news/press/2011pres/01/20110107a.html>.

## **National Toxicology Program Workshop: Role of Environmental Chemicals in the Development of Diabetes and Obesity**

OCPL ensured the content of the workshop was accessible by Web, phone, and other media to a wide variety of audiences. OCPL conducted a media Q&A session immediately following the workshop <http://www.niehs.nih.gov/news/releases/2011/ntpworkshop>.

More than 30 stories focused on the NTP meeting, including the following:

- On October 18, 2010, **BNA Daily Environment Report** wrote a story that focused on the upcoming meeting. Kris Thayer of NTP was quoted.
- On November 8, 2010, **Risk Policy Report** also compiled a story on the upcoming meeting that included quotes from Kris Thayer.
- A **Reuters** story on January 13, 2011, titled “Evidence Suggests Role for Chemicals in Diabetes” included quotes from participants.
- On January 13, 2011, **Chemical Regulation** ran a story entitled “Link Suggested Between Chemical Exposure, Possible Development of Diabetes, Obesity” that included quotes from Jerry Heindel of DERT.
- An **AOL Health** story on January 14, 2011, titled “Study Links Chemicals to Diabetes, Obesity” included quotes from Kris Thayer.
- A story in the **Raleigh News and Observer** on January 24, 2011, entitled “Do Chemicals Contribute to Obesity?” focused on the research discussed at the meeting.

### **Global Alliance for Clean Cookstoves Initiative**

OCPL developed materials to promote the international cookstove initiative that was launched September 2010. The Global Alliance for Clean Cookstoves is a new public-private partnership to save lives, improve livelihoods, empower women, and combat climate change, by creating a thriving global market for clean and efficient household cooking solutions <http://www.niehs.nih.gov/news/newsletter/2010/october/spotlight-cookstove.cfm>.

### **III. NEWS COVERAGE**

#### **Total News Coverage of NIEHS Science, Researchers, and Activities**

September 2010 — 611 stories

October 2010 — 553 stories

November 2010 — 448 stories

December 2010 — 788 stories

January 2011 — 315 stories (as of January 24)

#### **Highlights from Newspapers, Trade Papers, and National Magazines**

- On August 19, 2010, **Medscape**'s story “New US Research Committee on Breast Cancer and the Environment” included quotes by Linda Birnbaum.

- A press release issued by NIEHS on August 24, 2010, [Atrazine Causes Prostate Inflammation in Male Rats and Delays Puberty](#), resulted in several media stories, including one in **Environment News Service**. Sue Fenton of DIR was quoted.
- On August 24, 2010, a story in **FDA Week** entitled “New FDA Council Eyes Modernizing Toxicology, Risk Assessments” included quotes from Ray Tice of NTP.
- On August 26, 2010, a story in the **Baltimore Sun** entitled “Alternatives to Animal Testing Gaining Ground” included information about NTP’s efforts to reduce, refine, and replace animals.
- On September 2, 2010, **Scientific American**’s story “Rabbit Rest: Can Lab-grown Human Skin Replace Animals in Toxicity Testing?” featured quotes from NTP’s William Stokes.
- On September 6, 2010, **The New York Times** ran a story entitled “In Feast of Data on BPA Plastic, No Final Answer” that included quotes from Linda Birnbaum.
- On September 8, 2010, **Time** magazine featured a story on “The BPA Debate: Bad Reputation and Still No Answers” that included quotes from Linda Birnbaum.
- On September 20, 2010, **The New York Times** ran a story entitled “Study: Human Exposure to BPA ‘Grossly Underestimated’” which included quotes from Linda Birnbaum.
- On September 26, 2010, **The Chronicle of Higher Education** ran a story entitled “Mixed Signals About Cellphones’ Health Risks Hang Up Research” that included quotes from John Bucher of NTP.
- On October 1, 2010, **CBS News** compiled some slides for a piece on “BPA: 7 Secret Sources” that included quotes from NTP’s John Bucher.
- On October 28, 2010, **North Jersey.com** featured a lengthy article about the NIEHS Sister Study entitled “Breast Cancer Study Turns to Patients’ Sisters to Aid Research” that included quotes from Paula Juras of DIR.
- In November 2010, NIEHS intramural scientists were featured on the cover of the **The NIH Catalyst** for a story entitled “NIEHS Advances Predictive Genomics.”
- On November 8, 2010, a story in **Chemical and Engineering News** entitled “Fetal Origins of Disease” included quotes from Mike Waalkes of NTP.
- On November 19, 2010, **Pesticide and Chemical Policy Week** included a lengthy Q&A story with Linda Birnbaum.
- On November 22, 2010, the **Raleigh News and Observer** included a story entitled “Finding Secrets of Small Worlds” that focused on nanotechnology and included excerpts from a conversation with Nigel Walker of NTP.
- On November 30, 2010, **Discovery News** ran a story entitled “As BPA concerns Rise, Can Companies Seek Alternatives” which featured quotes from Linda Birnbaum.
- In November, several stories, including one in **Genome Web**, highlighted the move of Rick Woychik from The Jackson Laboratory to the role of NIEHS Deputy Director. OCPL also helped promote this good news with a feature story on the new Deputy in the January issue of the Environmental Factor  
<http://www.niehs.nih.gov/news/newsletter/2011/january/spotlight-woychik.cfm>.

- In December 2010, **Nature Medicine** ran a story entitled “Animal Testing Alternatives Come Alive in US” that included quotes from Ray Tice.
- The December 16, 2010 issue of **Nature** included the story “Fear in the Dust” with quotes from Aubrey Miller. A December 10 story in **MedPage Today** also focused on erionite and quoted Aubrey Miller.
- The December 25 issue of the **New Scientist** ran a story “Welcome to the Exposome” that featured NIEHS grantees and included quotes from David Balshaw of DERT.
- On December 29, 2010, an **Associated Press** article entitled “Pitt Prof at the Forefront of a Futuristic Science” focused on an NIEHS grantee and included quotes from Carol Shreffler of DERT.
- The January/February issue of **Scientific American Mind** featured a story entitled “Handicapped by our Genes” that included quotes from Serena Dudek of DIR, and focused on some of her neuroscience work.
- On January 5, 2011, **Chemical and Engineering News** ran a story entitled “Pollutants’ Passage From Mother to Child” that includes quotes from Linda Birnbaum.
- On January 10, 2011, **The New York Times** article “Sneeze-Free Zone” included quotes from Darryl Zeldin of DIR.

#### **IV. PUBLIC INFORMATION, OUTREACH, AND TRAINING**

OCPL supports both internal and external communications efforts.

##### **Society of Toxicology 50th Anniversary: Benchmarks in Toxicology Project**

OCPL took the lead in a special poster project called Benchmarks in Toxicology, to commemorate the upcoming SOT 50th Anniversary. The project poses the question: “What are the most influential events, discoveries, and people that have helped to shape the field of toxicology?” Our online nomination process generated more than 200 nominations. The poster will debut at the SOT annual meeting in March. OCPL also plans to conduct a number of outreach efforts related to the conference and, once again, will provide live updates from SOT on a dedicated Web space that can be shared with everyone.

##### **Combined Federal Campaign (CFC) for NIEHS**

This year’s successful CFC effort was chaired by an OCPL staff person. OCPL developed a dedicated Web page on the internal site that helped communicate information about the campaign. The site received more than 9,000 hits during the two month campaign. Numerous events were held at NIEHS to raise awareness and excitement about the campaign.

- \$106,000 pledged — \$12,000 more than the previous record set in 2005, and \$15,000 or 15 percent greater than last year.
- 206 participants — the highest overall number and percentage, at 30 percent, since 2005.

## **NIEHS Pulse Survey**

OCPL developed all communication materials (posters, t-shirts, talking points, Web site, e-mails, stickers and cards, and table tents) related to the launch and implementation of the Pulse Survey. The Pulse Survey was an NIEHS employee survey conducted in November 2010.

## **16<sup>th</sup> Annual Heinz Awards**

OCPL worked with the Heinz Foundation to promote the recipients of the 16th Heinz Awards, which included three NIEHS grantees. The press release was posted on the NIEHS Web site, featured in the Environmental Factor, and circulated to media outlets.

## **Louisville Kentucky Community Forums**

OCPL worked with NIEHS staff from throughout the institute, as well as the University of Louisville Center for Environmental Genomics and Integrative Biology, to support a community forum on October 20, 2010, on the social and environmental determinants of health. Linda Birnbaum served as the lead discussant. OCPL helped promote the meeting and reported on it in the Environmental Factor

<http://www.niehs.nih.gov/news/newsletter/2010/november/spotlight-forum.cfm>.

A story entitled “Forum Focuses on Health Problems, Causes in Western Louisville” also appeared in the Courier Journal, which included quotes from Linda Birnbaum.

## **Public Inquiries**

OCPL responded to approximately 150 public inquiries per month, since September 2010, received by phone, mail, and e-mail. The questions range from concerns about electromagnetic fields (EMFs) to requests for educational materials and referrals to environmental health clinics. OCPL staff also conducts tours of the institute for members of the public.

## **Online Newsletter**

The NIEHS monthly online newsletter, the Environmental Factor, highlights NIEHS research, staff accomplishments, and ongoing activities. Many of the stories in the Environmental Factor are selected and used by other publications, including the **NIH Record**, **NIH Catalyst**, **NTP Update**, and others (see <http://www.niehs.nih.gov/news/newsletter/index.cfm>).

## **Web Pages**

Web highlights include:

- Gulf Oil Spill Response pages  
<http://www.niehs.nih.gov/about/od/programs/gulfspill.cfm>.
- American Recovery and Reinvestment Act (ARRA) 16 success stories at  
<http://www.niehs.nih.gov/recovery/index.cfm>.

## **NIEHS Pocket Card**

OCPL developed a new NIEHS at-a-glance pocket-sized card full of NIEHS facts and research priorities. The card is available on our Web site at <http://www.niehs.nih.gov/health/docs2/niehs-pocket-card.pdf>. NIEHS also produced laminated versions of these cards, which were distributed at the Louisville Community forum and other public meetings.

## **Writing and Media Training**

OCPL offered two training sessions this fall.

OCPL conducted an all day writing class on September 16, 2010. Fifteen postdocs and others currently writing for the Environmental Factor and other NIEHS communications participated in the class. Evaluation forms and follow-up e-mails were sent to participants to solicit additional feedback. The writing course received high praise from participants.

OCPL also sponsored individual media coaching November 2-3, 2010 for new staff in the NIEHS Bethesda office and DIR Acting Scientific Director David Miller. The training helped staff become better spokespeople and provided them with the confidence and skills they need to conduct media interviews.

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