

NATIONAL INSTITUTE OF ENVIRONMENTAL HEALTH SCIENCES  
Division of Extramural Research and Training

**NATIONAL ADVISORY ENVIRONMENTAL HEALTH SCIENCES COUNCIL**  
May 22, 2009

Concept Clearance  
For  
Key Message Development and Dissemination Research Contract

**Introduction:**

To address the complex problem of how environmental exposures and personal susceptibility factors influence breast cancer development, the National Institute of Environmental Health Sciences (NIEHS) and National Cancer Institute (NCI) cofounded the Breast Cancer and the Environment Research Program (BCERP), a seven year, \$35M investment, in 2003 to study environmental exposures that may predispose a woman to breast cancer throughout her life. Each Center within the program includes a basic science and an epidemiology research project as well as a community outreach and translation core (COTC). The BCERP has produced a significant body of transdisciplinary knowledge, much of which is published in the peer-review literature. However, the synthesis of this information into integrated messages at appropriate education levels that can be broadly disseminated to affected communities has not occurred to any significant extent. Although the BCERP has annual meetings open to the public for the dissemination of recent research findings and makes available scholarships to support travel expenses for a select number of advocates and stakeholders, attendance by the Breast Cancer Advocacy Community is limited to those individuals with the flexibility and resources to attend multiday conferences. Hence, alternate mechanisms for the identification, development, and dissemination of key messages are needed.

NIEHS is proposing to use a contract mechanism to facilitate the translation of BCERP research findings to readily comprehensible messages and dissemination of those messages to the Breast Cancer Advocacy community as a companion to the existing and re-announced BCERP presented at this Council. As part of the overall concept for the BCERP, the NIEHS and NCI have identified a need to develop strategies for creating important key messages derived from the BCERP research findings; to broadly disseminate those messages to appropriate target audiences within the breast cancer advocacy and/or survivor community; and to evaluate the effectiveness of those key messages within the identified target audience. While the intent of this effort is to develop key messages and disseminate the findings from the BCERP to the Breast Cancer Advocacy community, the strategy being developed is broadly applicable and could serve as a model for other diseases and their affected communities.

**Purpose and Project Plan:**

The goal for this contract activity is to increase awareness of the role of the environment (broadly defined to include chemical, physical, biological, and social factors) in breast cancer risk and the opportunities that life-style choices may make in modifying that risk. Reaching the

appropriate audience presents a variety of challenges including identifying the best target audience(s); identifying the media formats most likely to reach and impact the identified target audience(s); and evaluating how well the target audience assimilated the message into their lifestyle choices. All this must be accomplished with well designed messages that avoid inciting undue health concerns among the stakeholders.

There are several tasks proposed to be undertaken. These include:

- 1) Developing a Comprehensive Dissemination plan of Breast Cancer Organizations.
- 2) Identifying outreach communication needs of the Breast Cancer Advocacy community and identify appropriate target audiences.
- 3) Convening a meeting of Risk Communications Experts to identify key messages from the body of BCERP-published literature and products ready for further development as well as strategies for developing messages which avoid causing undue health concerns within the affected community.
- 4) Translating research findings into expert-identified key messages and populating appropriately branded Breast Cancer Media Toolboxes with a variety of different media formats per toolbox. Each of the toolboxes will be customized for a specific target audience, to include appropriate education level.
- 5) Developing focused messages for individual Breast Cancer Organizations (on request) for messages deemed to be within the scope BCERP research findings as determined by the Risk Communication Expert Panel.
- 6) Evaluating the efficacy of the key message development and dissemination process.
- 7) Disseminating Key Message Toolboxes and Focused Messages to Breast Cancer Organizations making up the Dissemination Plan as well as the NIEHS Environmental Public Health Resource Center or other appropriate resource center as identified by the NIEHS.

### **Project Management:**

The NIEHS has identified a contract mechanism as the optimal choice in implementing the goals of this effort as it allows for the control necessary to aggressively produce and disseminate integrated key messages derived from the BCERP research findings. This effort will be coordinated with staff from NIEHS, the NCI, and the BCERP. BCERP key scientist will be included in the discussions with the Risk Communication Experts and other outside consultants to identify those key messages ready for dissemination. Throughout this contract, the NIEHS will consult with the BCERP COTC prior to approving documents and/or recommendations submitted by the Contractor; however, final approval authority resides within the NIEHS. The intent of this effort is to be complementary to, and not duplicative of, the existing BCERP COTC

efforts. NIEHS envisions this as a model which could be translated to other programs addressing disease-specific health issues. Award of this contract is projected for the first quarter of FY10.