

## **Staff Activities for Council**

### ***Meeting Reports:***

**Title:** NIEHS and EPA Children's Environmental Health and Disease Prevention Research Centers: Strengthening the Network

**Date:** March 6–7, 2012

**Place:** NIH Campus, Natcher Building, Bethesda, MD

**Introduction/Background:** More than 150 scientists, experts, and stakeholders, involved in children's environmental health, convened March 6-7 at the Centers for Children's Environmental Health and Disease Prevention Research annual meeting, to share scientific strategies, discuss new research approaches, and highlight late-breaking science in the field. The meeting held on the National Institutes of Health (NIH campus) and sponsored by NIEHS and the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA), provided an opportunity to foster collaborations, develop new partnerships, and enhance the overall children's environmental health network.

**Meeting Highlights:** Speakers included many leading authorities in the field of children's environmental health, beginning with NIEHS Director Linda Birnbaum, and EPA Director of the Office of Children's Health Protection and Environmental Education Peter Grevatt, Ph.D. Together, they opened the meeting with complementary messages that highlighted institute and agency priorities. Birnbaum challenged grantees to continue their record of success, by expanding their research and exploring other exposures and diseases.

Other presenters highlighted research findings, and discussed the challenges of quantifying exposure from conception through childhood and linking these to disease endpoints. They addressed topics including assessing how lifestyle habits and contaminant exposures in parents may lead to disease in children, and understanding the role of environment in children's airway diseases. In addition, researchers shared ways to improve genetic screening methods, novel exposure assessments techniques, such as analyzing children's teeth for signs of metal exposure, and topics that have received attention in the news, such as bisphenol A in food containers and arsenic in rice and rice products.

**Recommendations/Outcomes:** Partnerships with communities and non-governmental organizations were an ongoing theme throughout the meeting. A session in communication, outreach, and translation demonstrated the importance of community-academic partnerships, to implement change that can improve the health of communities exposed to environmental contaminants. A children's advocacy panel discussion, featuring representatives from many well-known organizations, such as the March of Dimes Foundation, American Lung Association, and

Children's Environmental Health Network, described resources and experiences relevant to advancing children's environmental health.

Meeting participants also had an opportunity to share their research results and discuss collaboration opportunities, during a poster session and breakout discussions. These sessions tackled the challenges of sharing environmental health data, using genome-wide association studies in neurodevelopment, implementing quality control standards in the analyses of epigenetic markers in human studies, and conducting children's environmental health research in daycare and school settings.

NIEHS DERT Planning Committee: Kimberly Gray (chair), Cindy Lawler & Annette Kirshner  
Session Moderators: Kimberly Gray, Gwen Collman, Cindy Lawler and Claudia Thompson  
NIEHS Speakers: Linda Birnbaum, Abee Boyles (NTP OHAT), Ed Kang (OCPL), Christie Drew (PAB), Mary Gant (NIEHS OD)

**Title:** NIEHS Partnerships for Environmental Public Health (PEPH) Grantees Meeting: "Strengthening a dynamic environmental public health network for tomorrow: Advancing science through critical reflection."

**Date:** March 7-8

**Place:** National Institutes of Health (NIH) in Bethesda, Md.

This two-day meeting included a variety of activities designed to promote grantee interactions, foster group learning, and, most importantly, spark dialogue about issues related to research translation, capacity building, and communication. PEPH grantees, including Pam Miller, founder of Alaska Community Action on Toxics, and Sacoby Wilson, environmental health scientist from the University of Maryland, highlighted community partnerships addressing health issues related to populations that are overburdened and disproportionately affected by environmental contamination. Presenters offered models for successful partnerships addressing environmental health concerns in low-income and minority communities, the workplace, and among tribal populations. They illustrated challenges within the realm of community-engaged research and offered innovative approaches to resolving these challenges.

In addition to traditional scientific and poster presentations, the meeting featured training sessions on PEPH evaluation metrics, innovative environmental health outreach tools, such as theatrical performances, materials development, and a healthy hospitals initiative.

Nine interactive breakout sessions further illuminated important lessons and recommendations on how greater effectiveness can be achieved within the PEPH program and for community-engaged research as a whole.

Trust building emerged as a major theme across the breakout groups. Participants identified the early involvement of community partners as essential to ensuring that researchers and community participants have a mutual understanding of the project and its goals, as well as the roles and responsibilities of each partner, thereby developing a greater sense of trust. In addition, the formation of equitable, long-term partnerships was recognized as central to fostering trust. Multidirectional education and training surfaced as a second central theme in the breakout sessions. Participants noted that researchers, communities, and Institutional Review Boards all need specialized training to implement community-engaged research approaches more effectively.

Participants cited the value of communication training for researchers, to equip them with knowledge and tools to effectively incorporate input and communicate findings to the community in ways that acknowledge cultural, linguistic, and literacy variation among communities. Similarly, communities can become valuable agents of data collection that help to define environmental health concerns in particular communities. Attendees agreed that translation strategies must consider and utilize new and various channels of communication, such as multimedia and social media, to amplify environmental health messages.

For more information on PEPH and to read project highlights, visit [www.niehs.nih.gov/PEPH](http://www.niehs.nih.gov/PEPH).

**Title:** EHS Core Center Annual Meeting

**Date:** March 26 – 29, 2012

**Place:** Boston, Mass

The Environmental Health Sciences Core Center (EHSCC) at Harvard hosted the annual EHSCC Meeting that brought together the EHSCC Directors, researchers, community outreach and engagement staff, and business administrators. A main focus of the meeting was how the EHSCCs are positioned to help advance the new NIEHS Strategic Plan. There were also sessions that examined the research and community engagement issues surrounding the emerging issue of hydraulic fracturing. As a result of the meeting, several EHSCC Directors and COEC Directors have established a working group to coordinate their work to address the myriad environmental health issues associated with hydraulic fracturing.

Several DERT staff members had active roles in the meeting. Gwen Collman (OD) led a discussion on the common fund, Christie Drew (PAB) presented on the importance of citations and highlighting Center accomplishments, and facilitated a COEC discussion on evaluating projects for low-literacy audiences, Aaron Nicholas (GMB) presented grants management updates to the business administrators, Liam O'Fallon (SPHB) helped plan and facilitated COEC sessions, he also helped shape concepts and strategize for the overall meeting, and Les Reinlib (SPHB) presented

information about a supplement program to the participants, and provided guidance to the EHSCC director at Harvard (Doug Dockery) on the development of the meeting.

The meeting also included a successful Community Forum ("Asthma in our Neighborhoods: Clean Air for Everyone in Boston"), facilitated by John Schelp (OSED) and tour of various south Boston environmental health initiatives. Materials from the event are available from the Harvard EHSCC web page.

**Title:** Data Sharing Strategies for Environmental Health Science Research

**Date:** February 6 and 7<sup>th</sup>, 2012

**Place:** EPA, Research Triangle Park, NC

**Introduction/Background:** This NIEHS workshop explored a range of issues surrounding data sharing in the environmental health sciences community. A preceding RFI (request for information) was used to gather information and recommendations from the environmental health science research community and other experts regarding successful approaches and strategies that allow broad data sharing in the field of environmental health sciences in human population studies. The goals of this workshop were to further clarify the scientific needs and goals for environmental data sharing, identify specific challenges related to the sharing of data that are specifically applicable to environmental health data, and elicit specific recommendations of how NIEHS can better facilitate data sharing among investigators in the environmental health sciences community.

**Meeting Highlights:** This meeting explored in some depth some of the many unique considerations for sharing data containing environmental exposures including: the heterogeneity of environmental and biological measurements, the potential to identify individuals based on the association of environmental exposures with geographical data, the increased interest in return of individual or community-level research results from environmental research, the regulatory implications of the use of environmental exposure and health data in developing US national research policies, and the unique concerns of vulnerable populations who are disproportionately impacted by environmental exposures. An initial session of the meeting focused on setting a framework for considering data sharing guidelines for data with environmental exposures in the context of the broader existing NIH data sharing guidelines and GWAS data sharing policies. An additional session addressed many of the ethical concerns related to sharing of environmental exposure data among researchers, such as protection and confidentiality of study participants when studies involved environmental biomonitoring or disclosure of exposure information, IRB inconsistencies/conflicts, role of consent forms, and research participants' concerns and interests. A panel discussion with researchers and environmental health science experts explored many different challenges and obstacles, as well as opportunities, that have been utilized in sharing environmental exposure data in a diverse variety of human population studies. The second day of

the workshop focused on the minimal data requirements NIEHS might include in a data sharing plan to promote data sharing among researchers. Some data sharing “success stories” were also highlighted with proof of principle lessons and applications for best leveraging unique environmental exposure datasets for scientific discovery and translation.

**Recommendations/Outcomes:** Specific recommendations of efforts that might allow maximization of data sharing and collaborations among environmental health science researchers include: establishing environmental exposure measurement standards and/or vocabularies and harmonization of data collection methodologies to more easily allow cross-study comparisons; encouraging grantees to include future sharing of their data in informed consent processes, including the expectations for return of research results, scientific publications, and other forms of dissemination; incorporating study subjects/community members preferences to guide data sharing policies; addressing specific needs for de-identification of geographically based data; and leveraging existing IT knowledge and resources to address integration, storage, and management of complex datasets. Many of these recommendations are currently being considered in the implementation of the new NIEHS strategic plan.

The DERT committee for this workshop included: Kim McAllister, Kimberly Gray, Cindy Lawler, Symma Finn, Caroline Dilworth, Claudia Thompson, Jenny Collins, and Gwen Collman.

***Staff Activities:***

Drs. Kimberly Gray (SPHB), Claudia Thompson (SPHB), Symma Finn (SPHB), Annette Kirshner (COSP), and Janice Allen (SRB) attended “Causes and Consequences Connecting Environmental and Human Health,” Duke University’s Spring 2012 Integrated Toxicology and Environmental Health Symposium, Washington Duke Inn, Friday, April 20th

Dr. Janice Allen, SRB, was invited by Steve Akiyama, to meet with IRTA fellows in DIR to describe the process by which grants get assigned to specific institutes, get reviewed, and get paid. Knowledge of the NIH grant review process is critical for understanding the context of the advice you will be getting on writing a grant application.

Dr. Janice Allen, SRB, gave presentation entitled, “Review of P42 Multicomponent Superfund Research Program Applications by NIEHS” to members of the NIH Review Policy Committee on March 21, 2012. Information gathered from recent Superfund review meetings, headed by all SRB SROs over the past several years.

Dr. Caroline Dilworth, SPHB remotely attended (via videoconference) the NSF-NOAA-NASA 2012 *Tri-Agency Climate Change Education Principal Investigators* on April 20, 2012 in Washington DC. Dr. Dilworth gave a presentation on “Climate Change and Human Health” and participated in the Q&A session for the “Science of Climate Change Impacts and Solutions” panel of the meeting.

Dr. Caroline Dilworth, SPHB, gave a presentation on April 26, 2012 titled “Funding opportunities in environmental health sciences” for a video-conference on “Grants for Environmental Projects & Research” held by Congressman Henry Cuellar, 28th Congressional District, Texas. Other agencies participating in the videoconference included the Department of Energy, EPA, and Department of Agriculture, National Institute of Food and Agriculture.

Dr. Caroline Dilworth, SPHB attended the Association of American Geographers – NIH Research Symposium on Geospatial Frontiers in Health and Social Environments on April 27-28, 2012 in Washington DC, and participated on a Federal Roundtable panel with representatives from other NIH Institutes, CDC, NSF, OSTP and Department of State.

Dr. Caroline Dilworth, SPHB and Dr. Symma Finn, SPHB organized and led the “Research to Action Grantee” meeting on March 6 at the Natcher Conference Center, NIH. In addition to presentations by each grantee, the community affiliates for each project will provide updates on their perspectives of the research. The project updates cover a wide range of community engaged projects including research looking at community and worker exposures to pathogens in food production, mercury exposure from fish consumption, the impact of traffic-related particles on childhood asthma in an urban environment, and engaging custodians in green cleaning methods among others. The participation of the community affiliates visibly demonstrated an optimal level of engagement across projects and the achievement of true partnerships between academics and community members.

Mr. Liam O’Fallon, SPHB led the planning team for and moderated the PEPH 2012 meeting that was convened at the Natcher Conference Center at the NIH in Bethesda, Maryland. The composition of the planning team reflects the broad nature of PEPH and the interest across NIEHS. Beth Anderson (CRIS), Caroline Dilworth, (SPHB), Sharon Beard (WETB), Kristi Pettibone (PAB), Symma Finn (SPHB), Bono Sen (EHP), Ed Kang (OCPL), and Kimberly Thigpen-Tart (OPPE) all participated in the planning team and had leadership roles at the event.

Dr. Kristi Pettibone, PAB, conducted two 90-minute training sessions on using logic models to develop metrics during the PEPH Grantee Meeting at PEPH Learning Institute on March 7, 2012. The sessions were attended by more than 60 people and used interactive activities and group work to facilitate skill development. Preliminary data from the session evaluations were very positive, we are working to analyze them and will use them to improve the training sessions and develop next steps.

Dr.s Kimberly McAllister, SPHB, Cindy Lawler, COSPB, Claudia Thompson, SPHB, Kimberly Gray, SPHB, Caroline Dilworth, SPHB, and Symma Finn, SPHB, organized and moderated the NIEHS Data Sharing Meeting held on February 5-6.

Dr. Kim McAllister, SPHB presented current funding opportunities and NIEHS research programs related to cancer research and cancer outcomes at the 2012 AACR Annual Meeting held in Chicago

IL. The session entitled “Funding Opportunities for Cancer Research at Multiple NIH Institutes” was held on April 3rd and featured presentations from program officers from NIEHS, NCI, NIGMS, CSR, NIDCR, NIAID, and Fogarty International Center.

Drs. David Balshaw, CRIS and Kim McAllister, SPHB, were both part of the National Academy of Sciences (NAS) planning committee and attended the NAS meeting “Biological Factors that Underlie Individual Susceptibility to Environmental Stressors, and Their Implications for Decision Making” that was held at the Keck Building in Washington D.C. on April 18-19, 2012. This workshop focused on some of the approaches and applications currently being developed to characterize individual variability from endogenous factors such as genetics and epigenetics, physiology, and age, and how this variability affects susceptibility to risks from environmental exposures.

Drs. Dan Shaughnessy, SPHB, Sri Nadadur, COSPB, Carol Shreffler, COSPB, Mike Humble, COSPB, and Cindy Lawler, COSPB, are participants in the NIH/FDA Tobacco Control Act working group along with Drs. Gwen Collman, DERT Director, and Aubrey Miller, OD.

Drs. Symma Finn, SPHB, and Claudia Thompson, SPHB, attended the University of Florida Deepwater Horizon Community-based Community Workshop and External Advisory meeting in Pensacola, FL, April 26-27. Drs. Finn and Thompson also organized and facilitated an integration meeting of the Deepwater Horizon, Community-Academic Research Consortium on April 30 at the University of Florida. The day-long meeting included program updates and work group meetings around issues of population studies, seafood exposure assessment, individual, family and community resiliency and community outreach and dissemination.

Dr. Kimberly Gray, SPHB, gave a plenary presentation on “Children’s Environmental Health at NIEHS” at the Montevideo scientific Conference titled “Environmental Health and the Political Agenda” that will be held in Montevideo Uruguay from March 22-24. Kimberly also participated in discussions with PAHO and the ATSDR PESHU’s regarding potential outreach to South America regarding training and education.

Dr. Kimberly Gray, SPHB. gave a plenary talk titled “NIH and Birth Defects Research: Current Funding and Future Opportunities” at the 15<sup>th</sup> annual National Birth Defects Prevention Network (NBDPN) annual meeting held jointly this year with the National Birth Defects Prevention Study, February 27-29 in Arlington Va.

Dr. Kimberly Gray, SPHB, and Dr. Aubrey Miller, OD, were invited to attend, present and participate at the National Children’s Study (NCS) Federal consortium meeting April 18th at Natcher hosted by Drs. Guttmacher & Hirschfeld. The main focus was to reinstate a dialogue with federal partners to get input and collaboration with the NCS. NCS is still working on process issues but wanted to re-engage the group since the last meeting about 5 years ago. There were about 50

participants from a number of agencies including EPA, CDC, HRSA, SAMHSA, Department of Agriculture (WIC program), FDA, ACF, DOD, HHS, NIH, AHRQ, and Department of Education.

Dr. Gwen Collman, Director DERT, and Ms. Jenny Collins, SPHB, attended and facilitated the Interagency Breast Cancer & Environmental Research Coordinating Committee in-person meeting that was held on May 9, 2012 at the Crystal Gateway Marriott Hotel in Arlington, Virginia. The Committee discussed and finalized the current version of the Breast Cancer and the Environment report, including the overall recommendations for the Secretary of DHHS.

Dr. Mike Humble, COSPB, and Dr. Bill Stokes, DNTP, attended a workshop on “Developing a Research and Education Agenda for One Health,” at the Emory Conference Center in Atlanta, GA, January 30-31, 2012. In attendance were academic and government scientists as well as representatives associated with government funding agencies. The meeting was sponsored by the Southeastern Center for Emerging Biologic Threats (SECEBT) and the Southeast Regional Center of Excellence for Emerging Infections (SERCEB).

Mr. Jerry Phelps, PAB, organized a PEPH webinar entitled “Inflammation: The Root and Route of all Chronic Diseases?” on February 28, 2012. Drs. Mike Humble and Sri Nadadur, COSPB, and Dr. Rod Dietert, Cornell University, were presenters. Presentation titles were:

Mike: “Inflammation 101: How is the Immune System Involved in Inflammation,”

Sri: “Air Pollution Morbidity: Potential Confounding Effects of Chronic Inflammation,”

Rod: “Inflammation and Patterns of Chronic Disease.”

Dr. Mike Humble, PhD, COSPB, organized an NIEHS Symposium titled “The Role of Environmental Exposures in the Development of Autoimmune Disease” at the 2012 American Association of Immunologists (AAI) annual meeting in Boston, May 4-8. The symposium highlighted examples of research projects supported by the NIEHS, and was co-chaired by Paige Lawrence, PhD, NIEHS grantee at the University of Rochester. Speakers included: Kathleen Gilbert, PhD, University of Arkansas; Jean Pfau, PhD, Idaho State University; David Sherr, PhD, Boston University School of Public Health; and Frederick Miller, MD, PhD, NIEHS Division of Intramural Research.

In February 2011, Dr. Kristi Pettibone, Dr. Christie Drew and Ms. Helena Davis launched a pilot test of the CareerTrac system. The purpose of the pilot is to test the system; obtain data in order to prepare sample analyses for the November grantee meeting; obtain feedback of potential system improvements; identify and answer frequently asked questions; and solicit feedback from testers about the challenges and benefits of the system. We worked with five T32 (institutional training) grantees to brief them on the system and provide them with their trainee data. The pilot testers are currently reviewing their trainee data and adding any new data. By late March, we expect that the grantees will be able to log into the CareerTrac system and download three key tables for using in their T32 renewal applications. A second round of pilot testing will be conducted in July-August.

The DERT website has started to go "live"; the PAB Branch page was the first to be pushed to production, followed by the DERT Office of the Director. Ms. Helena Davis is currently working with COSPB to finalize their content and layout for their branch page. SHPB is also gathering information for their branch page. We will be working on the rest of the branches and content throughout the spring. Many new pages have been launched with new content. Websites for the remaining branches should be complete by the end of June. Additionally, Stories of Success highlighting current grantees are being developed. When they are finalized, they will be pushed to production using the same format as the ARRA Stories of Success.

Dr. Annette Kirshner of COSPB and Dr. Janice Allen of SRB organized the SOT the SOT Funding Resource room at the annual meeting in San Francisco, CA; the room was open for two full days during the meeting. DERT program and review staff representatives (Drs. Carol Shreffler, Rose Anne McGee, Sri Nadadur, Danielle Carlin and Claudia Thompson) met with grantees and potential applicants and provided general information about NIEHS scientific priorities and guidance about submitting grant applications. Annette Kirshner also helped organize a new investigator luncheon at SOT and presented a grantsmanship talk. Both the resource room and new investigator luncheon were well attended and staff received positive feedback.

Dr. Annette Kirshner, COSPB, with the help of Dr. Cindy Lawler, COSPB, organized a grantee meeting for the Centers for Neurodegeneration Science Program which took place at NIEHS on May 3 and 4. This is an annual event at which the Project Directors at each of the centers presents a progress report for each of their programs, present posters and have an opportunity to explore collaborations.

Dr. Christie Drew, PAB, presented two papers at the recent Trans-NIH portfolio analysis meeting hosted by the new Office of Portfolio Analysis, DPCPSI on February 6, 2012. Her talks focused on challenges and emerging tools associated with assessing impacts of research grants as well as the NIEHS global environmental health portfolio analysis. Papers were well received and Dr. Drew has been asked to participate on the planning committee for the Portfolio Analysis Symposium to be held July 23-24, 2012.

Mr. Jerry Phelps, PAB, participated in the STEP Forum entitled "Disaster Strikes: Responses from NIH and Beyond" on February 23, 2012 as a member of the subcommittee that organized the forum. Among Jerry's contributions to the forum was getting Dr. Aubrey Miller to speak about the NIEHS response to the Gulf Oil Spill providing the NIH community an opportunity to learn about the Institute's various contributions to helping to deal with this disaster.

Dr. Christie Drew, PAB, presented a talk at the annual meeting of the Centers for Children's Environmental Health & Disease Prevention Research on March 7, 2012. She discussed the importance of citing grant numbers appropriately in publications, opportunities to correct publications that don't have citations, and emerging tools in PAB to track grantee impacts.

Ms. Martha Barnes, PAB, attended the Quest for Research Excellence Meeting which was held in Washington, D.C. March 15-16. As part of a Plenary Talk on “RRI (Research on Research Integrity): The First Decade,” she provided information on the results of the first 18 months with NIEHS as the DHHS Office of Research Integrity’s (ORI) funding partner. She also participated as an ex officio member of a focus group providing input to the ORI on future directions for the RRI program from the research community perspective.

Ms. Martha Barnes, PAB, organized a visit by Dr. Ann Hardy, NIH/OD/OER/Office of Extramural programs for NIEHS on March 20, 2012. Dr. Hardy provided a training session on human subjects to DERT program, review and grants management staff. Training included background on the law and policy surrounding the inclusion of human subjects in NIH funded studies. The basic course was followed by a series of case studies and a session on Certificates of Confidentiality. Twenty-nine people from SPHB, COSPB, PAB, CRIS, GMB and SRB attended.

Ms. Martha Barnes, PAB, served as a moderator for a session on “Certificates of Confidentiality: Do They Really Protect,” at the NIEHS/OHRP (Office of Human Research Protections) South Atlantic Research Conference, which was held in Raleigh, North Carolina on March 21-22. The meeting focused on issues related to bioethics, integrity and human subjects’ protections in Community Research.

Dr. Christie Drew, PAB, presented training in the PEPH Evaluation Metrics Manual to the 15th Annual Community-Campus Partnerships for Health meeting, in Houston Texas on April 20, 2012. Over 50 participants were in attendance (full capacity for the room), indicating a strong interest by conference participants. Feedback was strongly positive.

Dr. Kristi Pettibone, PAB, hosted a Keystone Speaker Lecture with Kristi Holmes and Cathy Sarli of the Becker Medical Library. The speakers discussed their Model for Assessment of Research Impact – a practical, do-it-yourself tool for tracking the impact of biomedical research. The Model includes guidance for quantifying and documenting research impact as well as resources for locating evidence of research impact. The model is available at: <https://becker.wustl.edu/impact-assessment>

Dr. Carol Shreffler, COSPB, spoke on “Pathways to a Successful K99” and answered questions at a workshop at the 15<sup>th</sup> annual NIEHS Biomedical Career Fair on Friday, April 27, 2012, on the EPA campus. The career fair is a yearly event that strives to provide opportunities for young scientists to explore multiple job choices and create a professional contact network for future careers in the Environmental Health Sciences. Participants are invited from NIEHS, EPA, the three area universities and others at the postdoctoral level in the RTP area.

Dr. Cindy Lawler, COSPB, was co-organizer and speaker for an invited symposium held February 18, 2012 at the annual meeting of the American Association for the Advancement of Science (AAAS) in Vancouver, British Columbia. The scientific symposium was titled *Autism: Genetic*,

*Epigenetic, and Environmental Factors Influencing Neural Networks.* The speakers presented a multidisciplinary perspective of how genetic, epigenetic, and environmental factors can interact to promote autism risk. Dr. Lawler's presentation focused on the unique challenges and opportunities for research and the role of the federal Interagency Autism Coordinating Committee in promoting autism research.

Dr. Cindy Lawler, COSPB, and Dr. Kimberly Gray, SPHB, collaborated with Autism Speaks to organize the third annual meeting of the Environmental Epidemiology of Autism Risk Network (EEARN). This network meeting is being held in conjunction with the annual International Meeting of Autism Research (IMFAR) that will take place May 17-19<sup>th</sup> in Toronto, Canada. The EEARN meeting is intended to promote exchange of information and foster collaborations among autism epidemiologists. A focus of this year's EEARN meeting will be emerging tools that make use of biologic information to focus statistical analyses in large epidemiology studies. Another portion of the EEARN meeting will be devoted to identifying existing data sets that could form the basis for future collaborative projects.

Mr. Jim Remington, WETB, will be presenting on the Gulf Oil response at the Clean Pacific Conference and Exhibition, May 16, 2012 in Long Beach, CA.

Ms. Sharon Beard, WETB, will participate as a reviewer for the US EPA Grant Review for the FY12 Environmental Workforce Development and Job Training Program May 17, 2012.

NIEHS WETB held a National Trainers' Exchange for safety and health trainers funded under its DOE Nuclear Worker Training Program on May 7-8, 2012, in Knoxville TN. The NIEHS WETP in partnership with the DOE, funds eight consortia to provide safety and health training to the people who make up the workforce engaged in environmental restoration activities at DOE nuclear weapons sites. Over 35,000 DOE workers are trained annually under this program. These consortia are the International Union of Operating Engineers, LIUNA Training and Education Fund, International Chemical Workers Union, International Association of Firefighters, CPWR—The Center for Construction Research and Training, International Brotherhood of Teamsters, and the community college consortium under the Partnerships for Environmental Technical Education. The Trainers' Exchange is designed for trainers to share best practices and new techniques through a series of workshops conducted by the trainers themselves. The goals are to meet and share ideas about how to create more effective and empowering training, improve training skills, and exchange best practices and techniques. Trainers from across the DOE complex will be participating in this exchange.

NIEHS WETB is a national co-sponsor of the upcoming regional Good Jobs Green Jobs conferences organized by the Blue Green Alliance, a national coalition of labor and environmental organizations. This sponsorship builds upon NIEHS WETP efforts to make Green Jobs Safe Jobs. The conferences are scheduled to be held in Atlanta, Georgia February 23-24, Los Angeles, California March 15-16, Philadelphia, Pennsylvania April 3-4, and Detroit, Michigan May 10-11.

NIEHS staff will present panels at each of these events and hold a partnership meeting for other federal and state agencies.

Mr. Chip Hughes, WETB, represented HHS OASH on an Interagency Working Group on Environmental Justice Panel at the Environmental Justice Conference and Training Program at the Marriot Metro Center in Washington, DC on April 12, 2012. Mr. Hughes discussed the implementation process for HHS in the new Environmental Justice Strategic Plan.

Mr. Ted Outwater and Ms. Sharon Beard, WETB, participated in the advisory board meeting of the National Partnership for Environmental Technology Education (PETE), a WETP awardee that runs the community college consortium March 30, 2012.

NIEHS WETB held the 2012 WETP Awardee Meeting and National Trainers' Exchange (NTX) "Training Today for a Safer Tomorrow," on March 27-29, 2012 in Ft. Lauderdale, FL. The NTX brought together trainers from all NIEHS WETP hazardous waste training programs to meet one another and exchange ideas about how to make their training more effective and empowering. In addition to exchanging training ideas and methods, participants also were able to improve training skills and meet with others to discuss issues and challenges. The 2012 NTX was an opportunity for 200+ rank and file trainers from the NIEHS Worker Training Programs to share and exchange best practices and techniques in health and safety training with other trainers.

Mr. Chip Hughes, WETB, presented as a plenary speaker on safety and health training issues to 2,000 members at the United Steelworkers Annual Health, Safety and Environment Conference in Pittsburgh, PA on March 8, 2012.

Mr. Chip Hughes, Director, WETB, NIEHS, Pertti Hakkinen, Toxicologist, U.S. National Library of Medicine, National Institutes of Health, and Cesar Bandera, President, Cell Podium did a panel presentation on Mobile E-Learning Health Resources for Emergency Responders at the annual conference of the Society for Applied Learning Technology (SALT) in Orlando, FL on February 20, 2012. Since the aftermath of the 9/11 disaster, the National Institute of Environmental Health Sciences (NIEHS) and the National Library of Medicine (NLM) have worked to provide mobile and on-line safety training resources on the front lines of disaster response. NIEHS has collaborated with a wide variety of federal, state and local-level stakeholders to promote the improvement and delivery of safety and health training programs for workers who have responded to Hurricane Katrina, wildfires, floods, chemical releases and the epic BP oil spill in the Gulf. NIEHS, Cell Podium and NLM presented lessons learned in developing mobile learning and communication tools for emergency responders.

The Roadmap Epigenomics Program Investigators' Meeting will be followed by a Steering Committee meeting for the Reference Epigenome Mapping Center and Epigenome Data Analysis Coordinating Center Consortium on May 16<sup>th</sup> (same location). Dr. Fred Tyson of COSPB is co-chairing the Steering Committee Meeting and will present an update on progress towards

consortium mapping production. Fred Tyson has also organized the meeting, along with Ms. Astrid Haugen and Dr. Lisa Chadwick of COSPB and Dr. Kim McAllister, SPHB, as well as NIH staff at NIDA.

Dr. Sri Nadadur was an invited keynote speaker at the Nano Safety Congress meeting, Antalya, Turkey, April 26-29, 2012. This meeting was organized by Nan Linen a consortium among seven European countries and India to address health and safety issues through collaborative research agreements in the format of a consortium. Dr. Nadadur shared information with the participants on the research gaps and needs, and the ongoing efforts of consortia approaches in the US funded by NIEHS and overall coordinated efforts across the National Nanotechnology Initiative.

#### ***Staff Awards:***

Mr. Chip Hughes and Ms. Sharon Beard, WETB, and Mr. Liam O'Fallon, SPHB, are being honored with the Good Neighbor Award by the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services (HHS), as part of its annual Green Champions Awards. Recognizing outstanding achievement at the local level, the Good Neighbor Award salutes those HHS employees, groups, and organizations that coordinate with community partners and stakeholders to educate the public on the importance of a healthy environment. Hughes, Beard, and O'Fallon were joined on their team by representatives from other HHS agencies, including the National Institute for Occupational Safety and Health, the Office of the Assistant Secretary for Health, and the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. Much of their work can be found in the 2012 HHS Environmental Justice Strategy and Implementation Plan, (<http://www.hhs.gov/environmentaljustice/strategy.html>) an agency-wide effort to reduce health disparities among minority and low-income workers, through increased education and worker training opportunities. To learn more about the HHS Green Champion Awards, or for a complete list of winners and nominees, visit the HHS website ([http://intranet.hhs.gov/about/programs\\_initiatives/gogreen/2011GreenChampions.html](http://intranet.hhs.gov/about/programs_initiatives/gogreen/2011GreenChampions.html)).

#### ***Upcoming Meetings:***

PPTOX III: Environmental Stressors in the Developmental Origins of Disease: Evidence and Mechanisms will be held May 14-16 in Paris France. Dr. Jerry Heindel, COSPB, DERT will present a lecture in the opening session, "Developmental programming by nutrition or environmental chemical exposures: two sides of the same coin. NIEHS is a cosponsor of the conference and Jerry Heindel is a member of the planning committee. This international conference will focus on the role of environmental exposures and nutrients during development on subsequent diseases/dysfunctions later in life. The goal of the conference is to examine the animal and human data supporting this hypothesis (developmental basis of disease) by disease, organ system, and mechanism in order to review the current state of the literature and to identify mechanisms for the effects as well as to identify research gaps and challenges and to integrate the basic and applied science.

Dr. Jerry Heindel, COSPB, is an invited speaker at a workshop on Endocrine Disrupting Chemicals titled, "Why are we concerned about endocrine disruptors." This workshop is sponsored by The Swedish Chemicals Agency and the meeting will be held June 15<sup>th</sup> in Stockholm. Dr Heindel will give the opening lecture on EDC related disorders and diseases.

Dr. Jerry Heindel, COSPB, will present a talk entitled, "Are Endocrine Disruptors Special?" at the European Union conference on endocrine disruptors: Current challenges and policy June 11-12, 2012 in Brussels.

Dr. Symma Finn, SPHB, has been asked to participate on a planning committee charged with organizing an NIH retreat for behavioral and social scientists. This retreat is being spearheaded by the Office of Behavioral and Social Sciences Research (OBSSR) and the BSSR Coordinating Committee. The retreat will be held on October 22, 2012 and is intended as a networking event and exploration of scientific topics of common interest to social and behavioral scientists and program administrators across the NIH.

***Publications:***

Kristi Pettibone, PAB, NIEHS, U.S. DHHS. (2012). Partnerships for Environmental Public Health Evaluation Metrics Manual. NIH Publication No. 12-7825. [available at [www.niehs.nih.gov/pephmetrics](http://www.niehs.nih.gov/pephmetrics)]. Authors included Christie Drew, Kristi Pettibone, Beth Anderson, Sharon Beard, Helena Davis, Caroline Dilworth, Liam O'Fallon, Gwen Collman.

Hormones and endocrine disrupting chemicals: Low dose effects and nonmonotonic dose responses, Endocrine Reviews, March 14, 2012 ahead of print. Vandenberg LN, Colborn T, Hayes TB, Heindel JJ, Jacobs DR Jr, Lee DH, Shioda T, Soto AM, Vom Saal FS, Welshons WV, Zoeller RT, Myers JP.

***Staff Changes:***

William Jackson joined PAB as a summer intern on May 7, 2012. He is a doctoral candidate in the School of Education at the University of North Carolina, Chapel Hill, with an emphasis on educational psychology, measurement and program evaluation. Mr. Jackson will be working on projects to build DERT's capacity to conduct cost-benefit analyses, including conducting literature searches on cost benefit analyses that have been conducted in the area of environmental public health, as well as identifying data sources for use by grantees in conducting cost-benefit analyses. Mr. Jackson also will assist with data analysis for several portfolio evaluations planned for the summer.