

NIEHS Office of Communications and Public Liaison (OCPL)
February – May 2009

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I. EVENTS

OCPL took the lead in coordinating the **Welcoming Ceremony** and installation for Linda Birnbaum as the NIEHS director on March 13, 2009. The ceremony at NIEHS included a formal program in the morning, with a swearing in by NIH Acting Director Raynard Kington, M.D., remarks by Congressman David Price, Ph.D., and others, including former NTP Associate Director and Environmental Health Perspectives Editor-in-Chief George Lucier, Ph.D., who served as master of ceremonies. OCPL also coordinated the “Afternoon of Science” lectures, which included talks by three distinguished lecturers including NAEHS Council member and grantee [Grace LeMasters, Ph.D.](#) OCPL arranged for the events to be webcast. Stories were written by OCPL staff for the newsletters **Environmental Factor** and **NIH Record**.

(See <http://www.niehs.nih.gov/news/newsletter/2009/april/birnbaum-director.cfm>)

OCPL worked with NIEHS DERT staff and others at HHS/NIH to promote the **American Recovery and Reinvestment Act**, including developing a dedicated web page for new grant opportunities. OCPL created a fact sheet entitled “[The American Recovery and Reinvestment Act: NIEHS Grant Opportunities](#)” providing information about two-year funding available.

OCPL teamed with OM and the Office of Clinical Research to share information with employees and the public about the **H1N1 virus**. In coordination with the HHS, NIH and CDC, information was rapidly placed on the NIEHS Web site and is updated regularly, in addition to the dissemination of regular e-mail updates.

On April 21, 2009, a new **PBS documentary** produced for **Frontline** entitled “Poisoned Waters” (<http://www.pbs.org/wgbh/pages/frontline/poisonedwaters/>) aired on stations across the country. NIEHS Director Linda Birnbaum was interviewed for the show. The OCPL Communications director arranged the interviews and attended a prescreening of the final show at the National Press Club in April.

OCPL worked with NIEHS and NTP staff to showcase activities at the annual **Society of Toxicology** Annual Meeting in Baltimore, March 15-19, 2009. These efforts included staffing a major exhibit, and developing a dedicated NIEHS Web site about the annual meeting with a listing of NIEHS and NTP presentations and posters. OCPL produced a

four-page handout entitled “[NTP Unveils New Non-Cancer Evaluation Criteria](#),” and issued a news advisory entitled “[Hear About Emerging Trends in Toxicology Research](#).” Reporters from **Risk Policy Alert**, **National Public Radio**, **Pesticide and Toxic Chemical News**, and **Environmental Working Group** interviewed NIEHS Director Linda Birnbaum and other NIEHS/NTP participants.

OCPL hosted an NIEHS exhibit and distributed materials at the **American Association for Advancement of Science (AAAS)** in Chicago, February 11–16, 2009.

NIH NanoWeek 2009. NIH highlighted the field of NanoHealth during the week of April 7, 2009, by hosting a series of seminars and other activities. To bring attention to the important role NIEHS and NTP plays in nanotechnology research, OCPL worked with program staff throughout the Institute (DERT, DIR, OD and NTP) to develop a comprehensive and high profile Web site that was launched for NIH NanoWeek. The Web site “[Since You Asked: Nanotechnology and NIEHS](#)” answers questions as simple as “What are nanomaterials?” and provides information on “Research and Training Funded by NIEHS,” “New NIEHS Funding Opportunities in Nanotechnology,” and more.

Clinical Research Unit Grand Opening Scheduled. OCPL is working with the acting clinical director and his staff to host a ribbon cutting ceremony, CRU tour, and Clinical Research Translational Symposium on July 27, 2009.

II. NEWS COVERAGE

Total News Coverage of NIEHS Science, Researchers and Activities

In February 2009, NIEHS was cited in 304 news stories.

In March 2009, NIEHS was cited in 356 news stories.

In April 2009, NIEHS was cited in 282 news stories.

Highlights from Newspapers, Trade Papers and National Magazines

The January issue of **MAMM** magazine included an interview with DIR researcher Clarice Weinberg about the Two Sister Study. The article entitled “News You Can Use: Are You or Your Sister in the Sister Study? Read This” talks about the goals of the [Two Sister Study](#).

On February 3, 2009, OCPL worked with DIR staff and Duke University to issue a press release entitled “[Research Finds New Cause of Ozone Wheezing and Potential Treatments](#).” A story in the **Arizona Republic**, **NIH Radio**, and several other media outlets included quotes from Stavros Garantziotis of DIR.

On February 5, 2009, **Chemistry World** developed a story called “Toxicologist Assumes Leadership of Key NIH Institute.” This story includes an interview with NIEHS Director Linda Birnbaum, where she discusses her vision for the Institute.

On February 10, 2009, **Risk Policy Report** highlighted the Children's Centers in an article entitled, "EPA, NIEHS Release \$9 Million Grant for Children's Risk Study Centers." Kim Gray of DERT worked with OCPL and the EPA to provide information for this story.

On February 13, 2009, **The Washington Post** ran an article entitled "Agency's Role Probed in D.C. Water Report." The story included quotes from EHP Editor-in-Chief Hugh Tilson. A letter to the editor of **Environmental, Science and Technology** also focused on this topic on March 23, 2009.

On February 20, 2009, **Scientific American** ran an **Environmental Health News** story entitled "Chromium in Drinking Water Causes Cancer," which included information from NTP studies and quotes from Michelle Hooth of the NTP.

The February 20, 2009 issue of **Popular Science** included a featured piece entitled "The Unusual Suspects" that focused on new theories related to obesity. NIEHS grantees and DERT Program Administrator Jerry Heindel were quoted.

Throughout early March, numerous stories appeared in the popular press about bisphenol A, including the **Washington Post**, **WebMD**, **U.S. News and World Report**, **Seattle Post-Intelligencer** and more. Most stories mentioned the final NTP evaluation of BPA, which was released in September 2008.

On March 2, 2009, a letter from NIEHS Director Linda Birnbaum appeared in **Chemical and Engineering News**.

On March 9, 2009, the **National Public Radio** show "Tell Me More" invited Dale Sandler, DIR, lead investigator on the Sister Study, to join the live radio show to talk about recruiting minorities for the NIEHS led Sister Study.

On March 10, 2009, several stories appeared in media outlets including **The Boston Globe**, **Bloomberg News**, **WebMD** and more, about NIEHS funded work linking weather to migraine headaches.

On March 16, 2009, OCPL worked with DIR researchers to issue a press release entitled "[First Sister Study Results Reinforce the Importance of Healthy Living](#)." Many of the breast cancer advocacy groups circulated the findings, including **The BCN (BreastCancer.Net) News**. An interview with **NIH Radio** was added to the press release. The study results were also highlighted on the home page of the NIH Web site for several days.

On March 19, 2009, **The Tennessean** included a story entitled "Sisters Inspire Cancer Study Recruiter," which focused on the NIEHS led Sister Study. OCPL provided information to the reporter to develop the story.

On March 23, 2009, **Pesticide and Toxic Chemical News** included a story entitled “Communication Key Priority for New NIEHS Director,” as a result of an interview with NIEHS Director Linda Birnbaum.

On March 24, 2009, the **Daily Environment Report** included a story entitled, “Toxicology Program Proposes Five Categories to Summarize Reproductive, Other Hazards.” Quotes from Paul Foster of NTP were also included in the story. This story came about as a result of a session NIEHS/NTP hosted at SOT.

On March 25, 2009, the **Daily Environment Report** included a story entitled “Studies Find Nanoscale Titanium Dioxide Does Not Penetrate Skin, But Harms Bacteria.” NTP Associate Director John Bucher and Nigel Walker of NTP are quoted in the story. This story came about as a result of a session NIEHS/NTP hosted at SOT.

On March 27, 2009, a story in **Environmental Health News** entitled “Food may contain environmental estrogens” contained quotes by Paul Foster of the NTP.

On March 30, 2009, a story ran in **Pesticide and Toxic Chemical News** entitled “Experts See Challenges in EPA’s Chemical Toxicity Testing Plan.” John Bucher of the NTP was interviewed for this story.

On April 2, 2009, the **Bay State Banner** ran a story entitled “Hope for a Lupus Patient” that included an interview with Fred Miller of DIR.

The April 3, 2009 issue of the **NIH Record** included a story by OCPL staff highlighting “NIEHS Leaders Speak at Women’s History Celebration.”

On April 6, 2009, the N.C. paper, **The News and Observer**, developed a story entitled “Health Agency Leader Digs In: Director Vows to Focus on NIEHS,” which included an in-depth interview with NIEHS Director Linda Birnbaum. Others at NIEHS were also interviewed including James Putney, president of the Assembly of Scientists, and Stephanie Nick McElhinny, who leads the NIEHS Trainees Assembly.

On April 9, 2009, a story in the Careers section of **Nature** entitled “Prevention by Numbers” focused on careers for researchers who study environmental influences. NIEHS Director Linda Birnbaum and David Balshaw of DERT are quoted.

On April 15, 2009, **National Public Radio** hosted a segment entitled “Is ‘Better Safe Than Sorry’ Reason Enough For Law?,” which included part of an interview with NIEHS Director Linda Birnbaum.

On April 16, 2009, **The Washington Post** requested comments from the NIEHS for its story entitled “EPA Will Mandate Tests on Pesticide Chemicals.” NIEHS Director Linda Birnbaum was quoted in the story.

On April 17, 2009, a story in the **Daily Environment Report** focused on the Recovery Act funding for nanotechnology. The story entitled “Stimulus Funds to Support Research on Nanomaterials, Superfund Sites” resulted after interviews with Sally Tinkle of OD, and Sri Nadadur, Bill Suk and Chip Hughes of DERT.

On April 27, 2009, OCPL worked with NTP staff to develop a press release entitled "[Countries Unite to Reduce Animal Use in Product Toxicity Testing Worldwide](#)." OCPL developed a web graphic, notified reporters about the signing, posted pictures to the web, and arranged media interviews. The story appeared in **Cordis News**, **Cosmetics Design**, **The Rose Sheet**, **Chemical and Engineering News**, and **University World News**. An editorial by William Stokes of NTP appeared in the European Commission newsletter, **JRC**.

On April 28, 2009, OCPL worked with DERT Worker Education and Training Branch staff to develop a press release entitled "[NIEHS Teams with Federal and City Groups to Conduct Disaster Response Training Exercise](#)" that received attention from the local media.

On May 4, 2009, OCPL issued a press release entitled "[New Data Analysis Shows Possible Link between Childhood Obesity and Allergies](#)." **Reuters Health**, **NIH Radio MSN**, **ABC News**, **Forbes** and other media outlets reported on the new findings.

On May 5, 2009, NIEHS OCPL joined with NIAID and NHLBI communications staff to develop a joint statement by the three Institute directors, to commemorate World Asthma Day. The statement was issued as a press release entitled "[World Asthma Day](#)" and included a statement by NIEHS Director Linda Birnbaum. OCPL also developed a web graphic to bring attention to the release.

During the first week of May, several new papers from the DIR Epidemiology Branch received attention from the media. A story in **Reuters** entitled "Coffee in pregnancy may up cleft lip risk slightly" included quotes from Allen Wilcox. A story in **Reuters Health** entitled "High Urate Levels May Ward off Parkinson's Disease" included quotes from Honglei Chen of DIR.

The May 6, 2009 issue of **Daily Environment Report** included a two page special report entitled "Toxicologists See Birnbaum's Role at NIEHS as Opportunity to Promote Basic Research." NIEHS Director Linda Birnbaum was interviewed for this article at the SOT meeting.

III. PUBLIC INFORMATION AND OUTREACH

Public Inquiries. OCPL responded to approximately 140 public inquiries per month, received by phone, mail and e-mail. The questions range from concerns about EMF to requests for educational materials or referrals to environmental health clinics.

Online Newsletter. OCPL continued to increase readership of the NIEHS monthly online newsletter called the Environmental Factor that highlights NIEHS research, staff accomplishments and ongoing activities. OCPL staff worked with the web team to add a new "search" feature. (See <http://www.niehs.nih.gov/news/newsletter/index.cfm>)

The May 2009 issue of the online NIEHS newsletter, **Environmental Factor**, included a story about a meeting between the DOD and DERT that was inspired by a suggestion made by Ex-officio NAEHS Council member, CPT Michael J. Macinski, director of Public Health, MSC, USN Navy and Marine Corps Public Health Center, at the last Council meeting. OCPL staff attended the daylong meeting between DERT and DOD staff, and developed a story entitled ["DOD and NIEHS Discuss Environmental Sensors."](#)

Use of Laboratory Animals in Health Research. OCPL worked with program staff to compile a new fact sheet on the use of animals in health research.

IV. COLLABORATION AND TRAINING

Section 508 Training. OCPL, in cooperation with the NIEHS Computer Technology Branch and the Office of Acquisitions, hosted three days of NIH Section 508 training in April for staff, contractors, and contract and project officers. Section 508 requires that federal agencies' electronic and information technology is accessible by people with disabilities.

Release of Chemical Effects in Biological Systems (CEBS) 3 database. OCPL staff worked closely with CEBS developers to finalize and launch CEBS 3 to the public in April. CEBS is a public database available to environmental health researchers that houses data from domains such as clinical pathology, histopathology and omics. OCPL staff offered overall design guidance, and guidance on ease of use Section 508 to ensure people with disabilities can access the information.
(See <http://www.niehs.nih.gov/research/resources/databases/cebs/index.cfm>)

Anonymous Suggestions to the Director. At the request of the NIEHS director, OCPL worked with staff from OD, OM and CTB to develop quick, user friendly ways for employees to anonymously communicate with the NIEHS director. OCPL and CTB staff developed a electronic suggestion and comment box on the NIEHS internal Web site, the Junction. Additionally, boxes were physically placed around the building for written suggestions or questions. Responses to commonly asked questions or suggestions are placed on the Junction for staff to read.

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