

**NIEHS Office of Communications and Public Liaison (OCPL)  
February 2015 – May 2015**

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**I. EVENTS**



**Women’s Health Awareness.** OCPL worked closely with Joan Packenham of DIR to proactively promote attendance at a local women’s health awareness day event. This included preparing Packenham for an on-camera TV [interview](#) at the WTVD Channel 11 studio, which aired April 8. More than 400 participants joined NIEHS and its co-sponsors at the April 11 event at North Carolina Central University in Durham. A May Factor [story](#) about the event was also developed.



**Fluoride Recommendations.** NIEHS participated in discussions with other HHS agencies to determine the final recommendations for community water fluoridation. OCPL worked with agencies to plan events to inform the public about the HHS recommendations to lower the fluoride level to 0.7 milligrams per liter. The [HHS press release](#) on water fluoridation was posted to the NIEHS website on April 27.



**Five years after Gulf oil spill.** Five years after the Deepwater Horizon oil rig explosion, researchers at the National Institutes of Health are actively working with Gulf region community partners, to learn if any human health problems resulted from the disaster, and establish a new research response plan to be better prepared for future disasters. NIEHS issued a press release April 13, [NIH Still Active in Gulf Region Five Years After Oil Spill](#), to discuss the three-part research strategy. OCPL also updated the [Oil Spill Response](#) Web pages and developed a [story](#) for May Factor. Additionally, OCPL staffed the Gulf of Mexico Oil Spill and Ecosystem Science Conference Feb 16-19 and developed an Environmental Factor [story](#). April 17, **Tampa Bay Times** wrote an article, “Oil spill Q&A: 5 years later, has the Gulf of Mexico recovered from the spill’s effects?” which included quotes from Dale Sandler, Ph.D., of DIR.



**Society of Toxicology (SOT).** OCPL successfully coordinated the shipping, assembly, and staffing of the One NIEHS exhibit at SOT March 21-26 in San Diego. Web pages were developed and an April Factor [story](#) was written to highlight key events. Additionally, NIEHS created 44 tweets during the conference.



Photo by Raymond Thompson - West Virginia University researchers collect water samples at the confluence of the Elk and Kanawha Rivers.

**NTP and West Virginia Chemical Spill.** In December 2014, NTP launched new [Web pages](#), dedicated to the West Virginia testing activities. The [NTP Research Project Plan](#), as well as updates on a number of studies related to the chemical 4-methylcyclohexanemethanol (MCHM) continue to be posted to the site. All studies are expected to be completed this summer. March 10, **BNA’s Daily Environment Report** wrote “Chemicals spilled in West Virginia’s Elk River to be studied for potential toxicity by NTP.”

## II. NEWS COVERAGE

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

February 2015 — 958 news stories

March 2015 — 445 stories

April 2015 — 1383 stories

May 2015 — 277 stories (as of May 17)

### Press Releases

May 6, NIEHS press release, "[NIH Study Solves Ovarian Cell Mystery, Shedding New Light on Reproductive Disorders](#)," featured work by DIR scientists published in the journal Nature.

May 5, NIEHS press release, "[NIH Statement on World Asthma Day 2015](#)," highlighted research related to asthma supported by NIEHS, the National Institute of Allergy and Infectious Diseases, and the National Heart, Lung, and Blood Institute.

April 24, NIEHS posted a link to a press release, "[NIEHS Grantee Frederica Perera Receives Prestigious Heinz Award for the Environment](#)."

April 13, NIEHS press release, "[NIH Still Active in Gulf Region Five Years After Oil Spill](#)," brought attention to NIEHS continuing efforts in the Gulf region.

March 4, NIEHS posted a link to a press release, "[L.A. Story: Cleaner Air, Healthier Kids](#)," which highlighted research from the University of Southern California showing that children's lungs grow stronger as pollution declines.

February 24, NIEHS posted a link to a press release, "[AMA Honors Government Service, Dedication to Health Care](#)." The AMA press release highlighted Sandler's recognition for her government service. An Environmental Factor [story](#) was also developed.

February 18, NIEHS press release, "[NIH-Supported Researchers Map Epigenome of More Than 100 Tissue and Cell Types](#)," featured work by NIH grantees. Lisa Chadwick, Ph.D., of DERT served as the NIEHS spokesperson. Many stories were written, including the following:

- **Philly.com** wrote "First 'epigenomes' map highlights how genes spur health, disease."
- **PBS NewsHour** featured Chadwick in their story, "A detailed new map of our genome in action."
- **Reuters** wrote "Scientists unveil map of 'epigenome,' a second genetic code."
- **Science** reported "Massive project maps DNA tags that define each cell's identity."
- **Scientist** quoted Chadwick in an article, "Exploring the Epigenome."

February 5, NIEHS press release, "[NIEHS Funds Six Early-career Researchers for Innovative Science](#)," featured new researchers funded by NIEHS. A March Factor [story](#) was also developed.

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

May 8, **Natural Products Insider** wrote "Stakeholders meet to share ideas, info on liver injury and dietary supplements." The story focused on an [NIH-sponsored meeting](#), where NTP staff gave presentations.

**VIDEO**

May 3, **New York Times RetroReport** featured a video documentary, "[Safety on Fire](#)" that features Birnbaum and other experts talking about research on flame retardants. A story, "A flame retardant that came with its own threat to health," also accompanied the video.

May 1, an [editorial](#), "Alternatives to PFASs: Perspectives on the Science," co-authored by Birnbaum and NIEHS grantee Phillippe Grandjean, M.D., appeared online in Environmental Health Perspectives. The editorial accompanied the [Madrid Statement](#) on Poly- and Perfluoroalkyl Substances. Over 100 stories were published on this topic. A few had quotes from Birnbaum, including:

- **New York Times**, "Commonly used chemicals come under new scrutiny."
- **National Geographic**, "These chemicals in pizza boxes and carpeting last forever."
- **Environmental Health News**, "Scientists call for limits on stain and water proofing chemicals."

April 15, **University of Arizona** staff wrote a story, "UA hosts meeting on environmental health," which highlighted the annual NIEHS Core Centers and Training Directors Meeting.

April 1 issue of **The Rheumatologist** included a lengthy interview with Frederick Miller, M.D., Ph.D., of DIR in a piece, "2014 ACR/ARHP Annual Meeting: Autoimmune Connective Tissue Diseases and Cancer."

**VIDEO**

March 31, the **Australian Broadcasting Corporation** aired "[Our Chemical Lives](#)," which featured Birnbaum speaking about endocrine disrupting chemicals and health.

March 31, **Huffington Post** wrote "Stop playing 'whack-a-mole' with toxic flame retardants, health advocates urge," which included quotes from Birnbaum. Other stories where Birnbaum was quoted included:

- **E&E News**, "Groups want to classify many flame retardants as hazard substances."
- **Environmental Health News**, "Groups petition federal agency to ban products containing flame retardants."

March 25, **Press of Atlantic City** wrote "Fluoride supporters dominate in Egg Harbor City." John Bucher, Ph.D., of NTP was quoted.

March 16, the **Wall Street Journal** wrote "Can personal air purifiers keep cold and flu bugs away?" The story included quotes from Darryl Zeldin, M.D., of DIR.

March 5, **National Geographic** wrote "Chemical exposure linked to billions in health care costs." The story included quotes from Birnbaum.

March 2-3, NIEHS hosted a workshop by the Institute of Medicine (IOM) Roundtable on Environmental Health Sciences, Research, and Medicine on "The Interplay Between Environmental Exposures and Obesity."

- NIEHS developed a **Factor story** for the April issue, "[IOM workshop examines role of environmental exposures in obesity epidemic](#)."
- **Chemical Watch** wrote a story, "US obesogen research programme to deliver new data," which included quotes from Jerry Heindel, Ph.D., of DERT.
- **Scientific American** wrote "How lab rats are changing our view of obesity." This also included quotes from Heindel.

March 1, **Environmental Health Perspectives** wrote “Diversity Outbred: A new generation of mouse model.” The story included quotes from Kristine Witt and Michael Devito, Ph.D., of NTP.

February 24, **Star Tribune** wrote “Iron range air quality study triggers spat among scientists,” which included quotes from Chris Weis, Ph.D., of OD.

February 16, an article in **Ensia**, “What are we doing to our children’s brains?” included quotes from Birnbaum and Kimberly Gray, Ph.D., of DERT.

February 11, **NPR** featured a story, “What causes breast cancer? These families want to help find out,” which focused on work being done by NIEHS grantees.

February 9, **New York Times** wrote “In Nevada, a controversy in the wind,” which included quotes by Weis.

February 6, a story in **Greenwire**, “Scientists defend human testing program as critics lay siege,” included quotes from David Resnik, J.D., Ph.D., of DIR.

In early February, two NTP scientists joined EPA at a public meeting in New Jersey to present findings on styrene-acrylonitrile trimer, also known as SAN trimer.

- NIEHS developed a **Factor story** for the March issue, “[NTP presents SAN trimer results at Toms River public meeting.](#)”
- **New Jersey 101.5** reported “Cancer cluster rat study findings released,” which included quotes from Mamta Behl, Ph.D., and Susan Elmore, Ph.D., of NTP.
- **The Jersey Journal** wrote “Chemical found at Toms River Superfund site didn’t cause cancer, report says.”
- **Asbury Park Press** wrote “Toms River Meeting to discuss Superfund site toxicity.”

February 3, **BNA’s Daily Environment Report** story, “Mechanistic data said useful to understand effects of different doses of chemicals,” included quotes from Birnbaum.

February 3, **Emergency Management** wrote “How a warming climate impacts public health” and included quotes from John Balbus, M.D.

February 1, **Desert Companion** wrote “Waiting to exhale.” The story focused on naturally occurring asbestos and included quotes from Weis. **Earth** magazine also wrote a story, “Asbestos found in Nevada and Arizona: roadblock and potential health hazard?” which included quotes from Aubrey Miller, M.D., of OD.

### III. PUBLIC INFORMATION AND OUTREACH

#### NIEHS Social Media Efforts

NIEHS continues to expand its use of social media in an effort to reach new audiences with informative environmental health messages. Currently, NIEHS posts content through the following platforms:

- [Facebook](#) (targeted to a more general audience)
- [Twitter](#) (targeted to both the general public and science community)

- [Google+](#) (targeted to the general public)
- [LinkedIn](#) (targeted primarily to those in the environmental health career field)

### Social Media Growth Trends

The early months of 2015 saw continued growth in NIEHS social media followership.

From January 1 to May 1, the NIEHS Twitter feed (@NIEHS) increased by an average of 200 followers per month, bringing its total number of followers to more than 11,200.

During that time, the NIEHS Facebook page increased an average of 150 “likes” per month, bringing its total followers to more than 9,000.

NIEHS Google+ and LinkedIn pages are still relatively new, though both have seen steady gains since their launch in 2014:

- LinkedIn — 1,113 followers
- Google+ — 2,902 page views

### Early 2015 Social Media Highlights

Public Service Recognition Week (Facebook): NIEHS was among the federal agencies that took part in celebrating Public Service Recognition Week. May 4-8, NIEHS posted 38 photos of employees holding up signs that expressed why they love public service. By week’s end, these photos garnered a total of 676 “likes” and 728 “page clicks.”



NOTE: “Page clicks” are recorded any time a user “clicks” the link embedded within a Facebook post — in this instance, to access one of the photos, such as this one of Birnbaum.

### Web and Materials Development

- Updated [Challenge Awards](#) Web pages.
- Completed new [Web pages](#) for the Inflammation and Autoimmunity Group headed by DIR tenure-track researcher Jennifer Martinez, Ph.D.
- Completed Web pages for [Shanshan Zhao, Ph.D.](#), new lead of the Biostatistics and Computational Biology Branch.

### New Fact Sheets, Brochures, and Pocket Cards

- [Systematic Review](#) (February 2015)
- [NTP pocket card](#) (April 2015)
- [Partnerships for Environmental Public Health](#) (updated March 2015)
- [Oil Spill Response and Research](#) (updated February 2015)
- [Career Development Awards from NIEHS](#) (updated February 2015)
- [Fellowship Opportunities Supported by NIEHS](#) (updated February 2015)

All fact sheets, pocket cards, and brochures are available on the NIEHS website at <http://www.niehs.nih.gov/health/materials>.

### **Training**

In January, OCPL hosted five Web-related classes focusing on topics such as developing Web content to making 508 accessible documents. About 55 staff participated in the classes.

### **Exhibit**

OCPL staff brought the NIEHS exhibit to the American Association for the Advancement of Science (AAAS) annual meeting Feb. 12-14 in San Jose, California. The NIEHS exhibit was also sent to and staffed by OCPL at the Endocrine Society meeting in San Diego, and later that month to the Society of Toxicology meeting, also in San Diego.

### **Online Newsletter**

The NIEHS monthly online newsletter, the [Environmental Factor](#) (Factor), highlights NIEHS research, staff accomplishments, and ongoing activities. Many of the stories in the Factor are selected and used by other publications, including the **NIH Record**, **NIH Catalyst**, **NIH Research Matters**, **NTP Update**, and others. A few examples are illustrated below.

- May-June, **The NIH Catalyst**, "[The Role of Environmental Exposures in Obesity](#)"
- May-June, **The NIH Catalyst**, "[Telomeres, Sex, and Hospital Infections](#)"
- March, **NIH Record**, "['Big Picture, Small Talk' Helps NIEHS Scientists Communicate](#)"
- February, **NIH Record**, "[Hood Delivers Rodbell Lecture, Mar. 10](#)"

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