

**NIEHS Office of Communications and Public Liaison (OCPL)  
September 2016 – February 2017**

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**I. 2016 YEAR-END HIGHLIGHTS FOR OCPL**

- NIEHS/NTP was cited in 11,945 news stories (up from 9,121 in 2015)
- Responded to 413 media requests
- Arranged 195 media interviews for NIEHS/NTP scientists
- Responded to more than 530 public inquiries
- Continue to grow our social media presence — NIEHS now has more than 13,200 Twitter, 17,122 Facebook, and 1,889 LinkedIn followers
- 10.4 million visits to the NIEHS public web sites
- 244,535 visits to the monthly online newsletter, the Environmental Factor

**II. EVENTS**



**NIEHS celebrates 50 Years of Environmental Health Research at NIH.** OCPL kept busy throughout 2016 planning and leading many of the events and activities to celebrate the rich 50-year history of NIEHS. The OCPL director served as chair of the 50th anniversary committee, which was comprised of a group of staff, contractors, and retirees. Since the last council report in September 2016, several major events occurred.

- **50th Anniversary Program.** On November 1, 2016 research partners, grantees, and public health advocates joined NIEHS staff and alumni for a very special program recapping the NIEHS history, scientific advances, and public health contributions resulting from the unique and prevention-focused research supported by NIEHS. Ira Flatow, host of NPR's Science Friday, gave the keynote address. Other featured speakers included former North Carolina Governor Jim Hunt, UNC Chancellor Carol Folt, Congressman David Price, Joe and Terry Graedon of the People's Pharmacy, and Actress Jessica Alba (by video recorded message). During the program, NIEHS presented [12 Champion of Environmental Health Research Awards](#) to global leaders whose professional efforts have advanced understanding of how the environment influences human health. A lunch reception with music and activities followed the formal program. About 600 people attended the event and another 400 viewed the program by webcast. The committee continues to update the 50th anniversary [web pages](#), including recapping events held throughout the year.
- **Time capsule sealing.** The committee held the final anniversary event on December 13 with the sealing of the time capsule, which includes more than [50 artifacts](#). Twelve of the people that nominated items for inclusion in the time capsule presented their items at the event. The time capsule will be sealed for 25 years and will be opened in 2041 – the NIEHS 75th anniversary.

- **Other key commemorative communication products developed include:**
  - NIEHS history video <https://www.niehs.nih.gov/about/anniversary>
  - NIEHS History and Milestones Booklet [https://www.niehs.nih.gov/about/anniversary/historical\\_overview\\_of\\_the\\_national\\_institute\\_of\\_environmental\\_health\\_sciences\\_19662016\\_508.pdf](https://www.niehs.nih.gov/about/anniversary/historical_overview_of_the_national_institute_of_environmental_health_sciences_19662016_508.pdf)
  - NIEHS History and Milestones online interactive timeline <https://www.niehs.nih.gov/about/anniversary/timeline>
  - Weekly Throwback Thursday emails and photo gallery [https://www.niehs.nih.gov/about/anniversary/photo\\_gallery](https://www.niehs.nih.gov/about/anniversary/photo_gallery)
- **Publications on the NIEHS 50th anniversary event include:**
  - November 18, 2016, **NC Health News**, [The Hazard Hunters](#).
  - November 15, 2106, **American Thoracic Society (ATS)**, [A Generation of Discoveries: NIEHS Turns 50](#).
  - September 26, 2016, **Chemical and Engineering News**, [Inside the institute charged with exploring how chemicals affect human health](#).
  - September 26, 2016, **American Journal of Respiratory Critical Care Medicine**, [NIEHS: 50 Years of Advancing Science, Improving Lung Health](#).
  - April 2016, **Fogarty International Center Newsletter**, [The National Institute of Environmental Health Sciences: 50 years of research and training to improve global health](#).
  - Personal Tribute by Bernard Goldstein, M.D., [Anecdotes and Reflections in Celebration of the Fiftieth Birthday of NIEHS](#).



**Environmental Health Sciences FEST.** In December 2016, for the first time ever, NIEHS brought together, in North Carolina, all of the grant-funded research center directors and their key scientific staff from across the United States, for a lively exchange of research findings, methods, and community engagement practices. More than 1,200 extramural researchers and NIEHS program staff attended the FEST. The NIEHS Division of Extramural Research and Training (DERT) had the lead responsibility for organizing the event, but OCPL worked closely with DERT and contractors to plan and promote the FEST. OCPL set up banners and a tabletop exhibit at the event, met with attendees in the Resource Room, encouraged social media visibility of the event, welcomed local journalists, and attended events to develop six articles about the FEST in the January issue of the [Environmental Factor](#).



**NIEHS Science Days.** OCPL also helped with promotion and implementation of Science Days on November 3-4, including webcasting the events and developing [two stories](#) for the December Factor.



**Report on Carcinogens.** On November 3, 2016, NTP released the 14th Report on Carcinogens (RoC), listing 248 substances as known or reasonably anticipated to cause cancer in humans. The report is a science-based document that identifies chemical, biological, and physical agents determined to be cancer hazards for people living in the United States. The report is prepared by NTP on behalf of the Secretary of the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services. A [press release](#), four new fact sheets,

and [web pages](#) with supporting materials were developed to accompany the report. The four new fact sheets include:

- [Cobalt and Cobalt Compounds That Release Cobalt Ions in Vivo](#)
- [Cancer-Causing Viruses](#)
- [Trichloroethylene](#)
- [Overview of the Report on Carcinogens](#)

Approximately 200 media outlets reported on the findings, including CNN, ABC, Fox News, HCP live, Nature World News, and Reuters.

**Outreach Highlights.** OCPL helped communicate information and materials about NIEHS to a variety of different audiences in the last several months.

- **Presentation to Research Fellows.** At the request of the Science Communications Network, on November 17, 2016, OCPL team leaders presented communication tips to 12 fellows participating in the three-year [JPB Environmental Health Fellows Program](#) coordinated by the Harvard School of Public Health. The OCPL duo shared tips about interacting with media and working with communications colleagues to promote impactful scientific research, as well as answered questions.
- **Congressional Outreach.** OCPL developed printed and display materials for a congressional briefing and reception on November 16, 2016. A December [Factor story](#) highlighted the event.
- **Outreach to Partners.** OCPL developed materials for an NIEHS Partners meeting on November 17, 2016. OCPL also developed a [Factor story](#) to highlight the meeting.



**Award Videos.** OCPL took a lead role in helping develop several award videos, for Linda Birnbaum, Ph.D., and NIEHS scientists, in the fall.

- [Birnbaum receives North Carolina's highest civilian honor.](#) Link to video at <https://www.niehs.nih.gov/about/od/director/index.cfm>
- [Kleinstreuer receives Lush Prize Young Researcher award.](#) Link to video at <https://vimeo.com/190227580>.
- [NIEHS clinical researcher receives Research and Hope Award.](#) Link to video at [https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=IlhTARJkh\\_I&feature=youtu.be](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=IlhTARJkh_I&feature=youtu.be).



### III. NEWS COVERAGE

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

August 2016 — 845 stories  
September 2016 — 850 stories  
October 2016 — 1172 stories  
November 2016 — 649 stories  
December 2016 — 420 stories  
January 2017 — 248 stories

#### Press Releases

January 10, 2017, NIEHS posted a link to a Massachusetts General Hospital release, [Mass. General-led Team Identifies Gene Mutations Behind Lack of a Nose](#). The paper appears in the journal Nature Genetics. Natalie Shaw, M.D., of the NIEHS Clinical Research Unit, worked on this research prior to coming to NIEHS and is lead author on the paper.

December 8, 2016, NIEHS posted a link to a Woods Hole Oceanographic Institution release, [Some Fish Quickly Adapt to Lethal Levels of Pollution](#). The study was conducted with NIEHS and National Science Foundation funding.

November 3, 2016, NIEHS press release, [Seven Substances Added to 14th Report on Carcinogens](#), lists new substances.

October 25, 2016, NIEHS posted a link to a Johns Hopkins University press release, [Mouse Tests Aim to Show How Genes and Environment Join Forces to Cause Disease](#). The funding was provided by NIEHS and NHGRI.

October 19, 2016, NIEHS press release, [NIH Study Determines Key Differences Between Allergic and Non-allergic Dust Mite Proteins](#), highlighted work by the Division of Intramural Research (DIR).

October 7, 2016, NIEHS press release, [NIH to Recognize 12 Champions of Environmental Health Research](#), announced awards that were given out at the NIEHS 50th anniversary celebration.

September 28, 2016, NIEHS partnered with EU-ToxRisk on a joint press release, [EU-ToxRisk and Tox21 Have Agreed to Collaborate](#).

September 23, 2016, NIEHS helped promote the NC Natural And Cultural Resources press release [North Carolina Award Winners Honored by Gov. Pat McCrory for Their Achievements](#), honoring Birnbaum.

September 21, 2016, NIEHS linked to the NIH press release, [NIH Awards More than \\$150 Million for Research on Environmental Influences on Child Health](#), on funding of the new ECHO initiative.

September 20, 2016, NIEHS worked with Stephanie London of DIR and the American Heart Association to develop and promote the press release [Smoking Leaves Historical "Footprint" in DNA](#).

September 16, 2016, NIEHS posted a press release that focuses on Harvard work published in Environmental Health Perspectives, [Brain Benefits of Aerobic Exercise Lost to Mercury Exposure](#).

August 24, 2016, NIEHS posted a link to an Endocrine Society news release, [Endocrine Society Announces 2017 Laureate Award Winners](#), which highlighted an award received by our new clinical director, [Janet Hall, M.D.](#)

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

January 11, 2017, **Chemical Watch** wrote "National Academies report lays out new risk assessment process," which included mention of NIEHS/NTP sponsorship of the report. **BNA's Daily Environment Report** also wrote, "Agencies focus in 2017 on new ways to predict chemical harms."

January 6, 2017, **FiveThirtyEight** wrote "[Everyone is vulnerable to conflicts of interest, including Donald Trump](#)," which included quotes from David Resnik, J.D., of DIR.

January 4, 2017, **Environmental Health News** wrote "[US workers making BPA have enormous loads of it in them](#)," which highlighted work supported in collaboration with NTP. Several NIEHS grantees are quoted.

December 21, 2016, two stories appeared in the **New York Times**, "[This pesticide is prohibited in Britain. Why is it still being exported?](#)" and a sidebar story, "[Fact-checking a claim about a weed killer,](#)" that included quotes from Freya Kamel, Ph.D., of DIR.

In December 2016, **NIH News in Health** developed an [article](#), "Making a healthier home," which included quotes from Andy Rooney, Ph.D., of NTP.

November 28, 2016, **Chemical and Engineering News** [wrote](#) "Superfund research center studies asbestos from all angles," which included quotes from Chris Weis, Ph.D., of OD, and grantees.

November 26, 2016, **Safety and Health** magazine wrote "Workers and diacetyl: 5 things to know," which included quotes from Dan Morgan, Ph.D., of NTP.

November 18, 2016, **NC Health News** [wrote](#) "The hazard hunters," which highlighted the NIEHS 50th anniversary and included quotes from Birnbaum.

November 11, 2016, **Pensacola News Journal** [wrote](#) "Job training available for environmental work," which included quotes from Sharon Beard of DERT.

November 10, 2016, **India's Business Standard** [wrote](#) "Air quality monitoring lacks uniformity in India: U.S. researcher," which included quotes from Gwen Collman, Ph.D., of DERT.

November 8, 2016, **Environmental Health Perspectives** wrote an [article](#), "Institutes in the lead: identifying environmental factors in breast cancer," which included quotes from Dale Sandler, Ph.D., and Clair Weinberg, Ph.D., of DIR; Suzanne Fenton, Ph.D., of NTP; and Gwen Collman, Ph.D., and Caroline Dilworth, Ph.D., of DERT.

November 7, 2016, **The Intelligencer** [wrote](#) "Determining safe PFOA level an uncertain science." The story included quotes from Fenton.

November 3, 2016, **CNN** [reported](#) "7 more substances classified as human carcinogens," which included quotes from Birnbaum. Other outlets including **Nature World News**, **MD Magazine**, **ABC News**, **WPVI-TV**, and **Fox News**, reported on the new substances listed in the 14th Report on Carcinogens.

October 28, 2016, **The Huffington Post** [wrote](#) "What you need to know about the claim linking baby powder to ovarian cancer," which included quotes from Clarice Weinberg, Ph.D.

October 27, 2016, **ABC News** did a story on artificial turf. The [piece](#), "Is there a hidden health hazard in your child's playing field?" mentions work being done by NTP in this area, and included quotes from Abee Boyles, Ph.D., formerly with NTP and now with DERT.

October 26, 2016, **Medical Research** wrote "Dust mite allergen proteins more abundant than non-allergen dust mite proteins," which included an interview with Geoffrey Mueller, Ph.D., of DIR.

October 26, 2016, **BNA's Daily Environment Report** reported "Relevance of rodent tumors after chemical exposures debated," which included quotes from David Malarkey, D.V.M., Ph.D., of NTP.

October 25, 2016, **Chemical and Engineering News** [wrote](#) "A better blood test for liver damage," which included quotes from Alex Merrick, Ph.D., of NTP.

October 25, 2016, **Risk Policy Report** wrote “International regulators back visibility of non-animal skin toxicity testing,” which included quotes from Warren Casey, Ph.D., of NTP.

October 19, 2016, **Duke Today** [wrote](#) “Dust mite allergens share rare combo of qualities,” which included quotes from Geoffrey Mueller, Ph.D., of DIR.

October 15, 2016, the **Argus Leader** [wrote](#) a story about MS, “Coworkers suspect downtown disease cluster,” which included quotes from Frederick Miller, M.D., Ph.D., head of the NIEHS Environmental Autoimmunity Group.

October 11, 2016, the **JAMA** [story](#) “Call to action on neurotoxin exposure in pregnant women and children,” included quotes from Birnbaum.

October 10, 2016, a [story](#) in **Newsweek**, “Deepwater Horizon oil disaster extends its toxic reach,” highlighted the NIEHS-led GULF STUDY.

September 26, 2016, **Chemical and Engineering News** [wrote](#) “Inside the institute charged with exploring how chemicals affect human health,” which included quotes from Birnbaum and other NIEHS leaders.

September 23, 2016, [The NIH Record](#) included the story “Birnbaum honored by North Carolina,” which included highlights of the award.

September 20, 2016, **Medpage Today** [wrote](#), “Cigarette smoking has broad impact on human genome,” which highlighted work by Stephanie London, M.D., Dr.P.H., of DIR and colleagues.

September 19, 2016, **Environmental Health News** [wrote](#) “Commentary: 25 years of endocrine disruptor research – great strides, but still a long way to go,” which highlighted NIEHS work.

September 2, 2016, **West Virginia Public Broadcasting**, did a piece, “Mountains of evidence: questions about coal’s most controversial practice may finally be answered,” which included quotes from Birnbaum.

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

In accordance with popular trends, NIEHS continues to expand its use of social media in effort to reach new audiences with its environmental health messages. At present, NIEHS posts content through the following platforms:

- [Facebook](#) (targeted to a more general audience)
- [Twitter](#) (targeted to both the general public and science community)
- [LinkedIn](#) (targeted primarily to those in the environmental health career field)

#### **Social Media Growth Trends**

The fall and winter months saw continued growth in NIEHS social media followership.

- From August 1 to December 31, 2016, the **NIEHS Twitter feed** (@NIEHS) saw a five percent increase in followership, growing from 12,731 to 13,319 followers.

- During that time, the **NIEHS Facebook** page saw a 14 percent increase, growing from 14, 976 “likes” to 17,264.
- Finally, the **NIEHS LinkedIn** page grew by 12 percent, from 1,681 to 1,893 followers.

**Highlighting NIEHS Events and Research Through Social Media.** OCPL promoted several NIEHS endeavors throughout the fall, including some related to the institute’s 50th anniversary celebration.

- **Birnbaum/NC Awards** — Promoted Birnbaum’s North Carolina Award through customized posts on Facebook, Twitter, and LinkedIn.
- **Children’s Environmental Health Day** — Penned four tweets and four Facebook posts in promotion of Children’s Environmental Health Day. Also, took part in the corresponding Twitter chat, using the hashtag #CEHChat.
- **APHA Annual Meeting** — Customized several posts for Facebook and Twitter, spotlighting the NIEHS role, speakers, and sessions at this year’s conference in Denver. Also, sent out reminder tweets using the conference hashtag #APHA206, alerting attendees when NIEHS personnel would be speaking at the event.
- **14th Report on Carcinogens (RoC)** — In November 2016, OCPL put a spotlight on the 14th RoC press release, as well as corresponding factsheets, highlighting the seven new substances reviewed by this report.
- **EHS FEST Campaign** — Developed multiple posts for Facebook and Twitter, leading up to and during the Environmental Health Science (EHS) FEST, December 5-8, 2016, at the Durham Convention Center.

### Web and Materials Development

OCPL worked closely with the Office of Policy, Planning, and Evaluation (OPPE) to develop content and launch the [President’s Task Force on Environmental Health Risks and Safety Risks to Children](#) website. In November 2016, also worked closely with OPPE and other agencies to disseminate and promote a new resource, “Key Federal Programs to Reduce Childhood Lead.”



OCPL worked with the Clinical Research Unit to develop two sites for recruitment of participants for [The CaREFREE Study: Calorie Restriction, Environment, and Fitness: Reproductive Effects Evaluation](#) and the [Body Weight and Puberty Study](#).



## Fact Sheets and Web Pages

- In December 2016, the fact sheet [Oceans of Discovery: How the study of oceans and lakes can improve people's health](#) was developed.
- In November 2016, worked with NTP and HHS partners to develop four new fact sheets for the Report on Carcinogens.
  - [Cobalt and Cobalt Compounds that Release Cobalt Ions in Vivo](#)
  - [Cancer-Causing Viruses](#)
  - [Trichlorethylene](#)
  - [Overview of the Report on Carcinogens](#)
- In October 2016, a new brochure, [Overview: Training and Career Development Opportunities](#), was developed, highlighting training opportunities at NIEHS and universities across the country.
- Worked closely with NIEHS program staff to launch the Climate Change and Human Health Literature Portal at <http://tools.niehs.nih.gov/cchhl>.
- OCPL staff also worked with program staff in October 2016 to update breast cancer web pages at [www.niehs.nih.gov/health/topics/conditions/breast-cancer/index.cfm](http://www.niehs.nih.gov/health/topics/conditions/breast-cancer/index.cfm).

## Conferences

- OCPL staffed the **American Public Health Association Annual Meeting** in October 2016.



## **New OCPL Staff members**

In August, NIEHS hired a new team to manage an increasing number of Freedom of Information Act (FOIA) requests, and the growing requirements for research to demonstrate compliance with the Privacy Act.



**Regina J. Stabile, J.D.**

### **FOIA Public Liaison and Privacy Act Coordinator**

Ms. Stabile earned her Juris Doctorate degree from the University of Maine School of Law. Prior to joining NIEHS, she served as the director of institutional records and reporting compliance for the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill for seven years.



**Shevon E. Johnson, M.S.**

### **FOIA Coordinator**

Ms. Johnson has a master's in bioengineering and brings extensive experience to OCPL, having worked as both a FOIA specialist and compliance officer for the U.S. Food and Drug Administration.

### **Christine Bruske Flowers**

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### **Robin Mackar**

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