

NIAMS at 20

The Extramural Community

By Dr. Stephen Katz, NIAMS director

With the help of our institute's extraordinary Extramural Program staff, thousands of the best scientific minds in the country are devoting their efforts to research on bone, muscle, skin and joints. They include new and seasoned investigators, women and minorities and scientists at many levels of professional achievement. They work in universities, hospitals, clinics and private industry; they have large and small grants and contracts; and they pursue basic, translational and clinical questions.

But they contribute so much more to NIAMS than the discoveries that drive our science forward. They also:

- Advise us on our planning and activities;
- Serve on our Advisory Council, on scientific committees and on grant-review panels;
- Review our publications;
- Mentor young scientists, feeding the pipeline of new investigators;
- Explain our science to the media, legislators and constituent organizations.

Over the years, we have been privileged to work with a community of scientists and administrators with boundless energy, creativity and dedication. Their contributions have been critical to our success and to the changed lives of millions of patients and their families.

"For 14 years, I have had the privilege of leading the effort to constitute the LUMINA cohort (for Lupus in Minorities: Nature vs. Nurture). This long-term project, involving Hispanics, African Americans and Caucasians with the disorder, would not have been possible without support from NIAMS, for which I am grateful."

—Dr. Graciela S. Alarcón, Jane Knight Lowe chair of medicine, University of Alabama at Birmingham



Two Degrees of Separation: Energy Conservation at NIH

Does your home electric bill shock you? What if you had to pay the NIH campus electric bill? Being billed \$3 million to \$5 million each month, NIH is the largest single consumer of energy in Montgomery County. With utility costs projected to increase at a steady rate, we must conserve energy. This means that each of us will need to change our habits. As a response to rising energy consumption and costs, NIH is implementing select building changes on campus.

Maintenance staff will be setting temperatures in buildings at 74° F in the summer and 70° F in the winter. At night, thermostats will be set to 60° F in winter and 78° F in the summer. These changes amount to a difference of 2° in both summer and winter. The changes will be made over the next month for the following buildings: 2, 10-ACRF, 10-CRC, 15K, 33, 35, 37, 40, 50, 51, 64 and 65. These buildings have automated control systems. Additional buildings will undergo the same change as funding for more automated control systems is made available.

Since people are comfortable between 70°-74° F, most people will not even notice the change. In some cases, you may simply need to select clothing that is comfortable, including a sweater during the winter and lighter clothing in the summer. The temperature changes will not affect sensitive-use areas such as patient or animal care facilities, which will continue to operate at their standard temperatures.

Signs will be posted in each building a week before the temperature change date. As the changes are phased in, building engineers will monitor affected areas to ensure all areas meet the new settings. Temperatures outside the standard may be reported to maintenance staff at (301) 435-8000 and to your facility manager. Standardizing the building temperatures should reduce temperature fluctuations, but note that personal heating and cooling equipment such as electric space heaters are not permitted because they pose a safety hazard and obstruct the energy conservation efforts.

Although 2° F is a small change, the cumulative impact will be substantial. The Department of Energy estimates that for every degree a thermostat is set back, energy consumption is reduced by an average of 3 percent. This is true in your own home as well. Changing building temperatures by 2° F should reduce NIH's energy costs up to \$1.95 million per year. Additional savings will be seen as other buildings join the program.

The temperature-change program arose as part of NIH's Environmental Management System. NEMS is integrating environmental considerations into day-to-day decisions made across campus and challenging employees to identify and implement new procedures for conducting activities in ways that reduce environmental impact. For more information on NEMS, contact Terry Leland at (301) 496-7775 or lelandt@mail.nih.gov. For information on energy saving programs at NIH, contact Kenny Floyd at (301) 496-7775 or floydw@ors.od.nih.gov. 📍

New Dental and Vision Program Introduced

The Office of Personnel Management has introduced a new Federal Employee Dental and Vision Program (FEDVIP) to federal employees, retirees and their dependents. FEDVIP will be available to eligible federal and postal employees, retirees and their eligible family members on an enrollee-pay-all basis. To take advantage of the program, there is an open season that continues through Dec. 11. Coverage will be effective on Dec. 31. For information on the dental and vision plans, the FEDVIP General Information Line, premiums, frequently asked questions and how to enroll, go to <http://www.benefeds.com/>.