



DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH & HUMAN SERVICES

Public Health Service

National Institutes of Health
Bethesda, Maryland 20892

DATE: July 23, 2008
TO: All NIH Employees
FROM: Director, NIH
SUBJECT: Enhancing the Work Culture at NIH

The NIH has always been an excellent workplace for scientists, clinicians, administrators, and support staff but there is always room for improvement. We would like to facilitate a culture at the NIH that nurtures our workers as well as our work by recognizing that our outstanding staff often have diverse interests and responsibilities outside of their labs and offices. The NIH is known for producing great science and great scientists, but we also want to enhance the family-friendly atmosphere and recognize the cultural diversity and the variety of perspectives that are part of our research environment.

Technology is not only reshaping how science is done, but where and when it can be done. Alternative work schedules, flextime, and teleworking are tools that may help employees maximize their work productivity and minimize commuting time, to free up time for family, including children, spouses/partners, and parents, and pursuit of other interests. Resources such as the Child Care Board, the Work-Life Center, and the parenting listserv are available to all employees to help them manage the balance between dedication to their work and dedication to their families. The NIH has partnered with several local universities to found the Mid-Atlantic Higher Education Recruitment Consortium, which will include universities, colleges, research institutions and other government agencies. The goal of this consortium is to facilitate recruitments to NIH by making spouses/partners aware of opportunities at participating institutions. Details about these services as well as future plans were captured in a forum sponsored by the Women Scientist Advisors Committee and the Office of Research on Women's Health earlier this month, archived at <http://videocast.nih.gov/Summary.asp?File=14531>.

We must all work together to enhance the work culture at the NIH. All managers and supervisors should support the use of these programs by their employees as appropriate. Employees are encouraged to suggest ideas for new programs and new ways to support our staff. You may forward these ideas to Dr. Joslyn Kravitz at kravitzj@mail.nih.gov. The NIH Leadership Team is committed to making this Agency a model for other research institutions of how science can be done in a family-friendly environment.

Elias A. Zerhouni, M.D.