

SUMMARY
NIH INTERNATIONAL REPRESENTATIVES MEETING
January 18, 2005

Dr. Sharon Hrynkow, Chair, and Acting Director, FIC, welcomed the IC representatives to the Stone House. She also introduced Dr. Paul Brounstein of SAMHSA who is currently working at FIC, as well as NIMH's Dr. Karen Babich, as the first two presenters at the meeting.

Preventing Youth Suicide in Resource-Poor Settings: Dr. Babich provided the background for a joint NIMH-FIC activity related to youth suicide prevention in resource-poor settings. There are 1 million annual suicides around the world and it is the 13th leading cause of death. Most of these suicides occur among individuals who are under 30 years old. In the U.S., the 3rd leading cause among youth who are between 15 and 24 years old is suicide. Most of these suicides stem from causes related to depression, depression and alcohol, loneliness, embarrassment, etc. Dr. Brounstein noted that based on consultations between FIC and NIMH, agreement was reached to undertake cooperative activities, with the Indian Health Service and other NIH ICs, including NIDA and NIAAA, on youth suicide prevention. The initiative will also include working with the International Association of Suicide Prevention (IASP) including at or just prior to the IASP annual meeting in Durban, South Africa, from September 13 to 17, on issues related to youth suicide prevention in resource-poor settings. The initiative will seek to address and focus on four topics, including: (1) basic research and program development at local levels; (2) identification of effective programs and best practices around the world and how they may be tailored in other settings; (3) better evaluation and data collection; and, (4) development of international collaborations and suicide prevention research networks. Further information may be obtained from Dr. Brounstein or Dr. Babich as the initiative progresses.

Arctic Research Issues: FIC's Ms. Natalie Tomitch, Program Officer for Russia, Eurasia and the Arctic, together with the State Department's Ms. Sally Brandel and Ms. Chris Elfring of NAS, provided a briefing on Arctic Research issues. FIC recently assumed its role as NIH rep on Arctic research issues and thus represents NIH interests at the State Department-led Arctic Policy Group (APG) and the NSF-chaired Interagency Arctic Research Policy Committee (IARPC). HHS cooperates in the APG on two working groups under this Group, including the Arctic Monitoring and Assessment Program (AMAP) and the Sustainable Development Working Group. In this regard, Ms. Tomitch noted that she would welcome any input from ICs with respect to health research initiatives that could further NIH research interests in this region comprised of 8 nations. ICs are also requested to provide information on their Arctic research activities for inclusion in the USG biennial report on Arctic Research Accomplishments, to be submitted to the U.S. Congress in July 2005. It was also noted that the International Polar Year (IPY), to take place in 2007-08 as an intense, internationally coordinated

campaign of interdisciplinary polar observations, research and analysis, aims to stimulate new and innovative research while building on and enhancing existing relevant initiatives, particularly those that are interdisciplinary in nature. FIC proposed early on that the IPY contains a focus on human health and this was enthusiastically accepted. Examples of IPY health-related research areas include genomics, hypothermia and hibernation, photoperiod research, and health-related impacts associated with climate and socio-economic change within the polar regions. NIH colleagues should contact Ms. Tomitch to provide her insight and ideas in support of NIH input into the Arctic Policy Group's working groups, the biennial report on Arctic Research Accomplishments and the IPY.

NHLBI/PAHO Cardiovascular Disease (CVD) Initiative: NHLBI's Dr. Ruth Hegyeli provided the group with highlights from the NHLBI/PAHO CVD Initiative for the Americas. The initiative has accomplished its goal of increasing regional interest and attention to CVD, the primary cause of death in the Americas. NHLBI and PAHO, together with other international and national partners in the region hosted a successful meeting in October 2004 that advanced scientific knowledge and attention on CVD throughout the region. NHLBI's Dr. Barbara Alving has also conducted site visits in the region. Moreover, scientists from Central and South America have visited U.S. facilities as part of the CVD initiative. NHLBI and PAH have also established dedicated informational websites related to CVD. More information on the initiative is available from Dr. Hegyeli.

Perspectives from FIC: Dr. Hrynkow noted that she would be conducting "State of the Union" consultations with IC Directors or Deputy Directors to discuss FIC-IC cooperation on international issues in the coming year. Such meetings are key to ensuring effective communication between FIC and IC leadership. Other announcements:

- FIC has been approached by the U.S. Embassy in Iceland seeking placement of an NIH scientist for a short-term duration to help coordinate NIH health research activities and in identifying possible future collaborations between Icelandic and U.S. health researchers. Dr. Hrynkow contacted several IC Directors to determine interest and welcomed other expressions of interest to be sent to George Herrfurth. Such a program is valuable in providing international experience to NIH staff and will assist NIH overall in identifying opportunities for collaboration.
- The FIC web-based clearance pilot-program system for 1820s will be demonstrated to Dr. Zerhouni in the near future. Initial responses from ICs and the State Department are overwhelmingly positive. FIC will also aim to develop and introduce a web-based system for country clearances.
- FIC and ORWH will be hosting an NIH-wide event related to International Women's Day on March 8. IC representatives will be invited to participate in this event. As such, the next meeting of the IC representatives tentatively scheduled for March 8 will need to be rescheduled or postponed.
- Dr. Hrynkow also provided highlights on her recent trip to India. FIC's Dr. Zakir Bengali accompanied her on the trip. She met with India's Deputy Minister of

Health to discuss the clearance process related to NIH-supported research grants in India. She also attended the 92nd India Science Conference where both the President and Prime Minister of India addressed the event and highlighted key science issues, including on the topic of women in science. Dr. Hrynkow's presentation at the Congress was on "Global Health and Women" (www.fic.nih.gov)

- FIC's Dr. Skip Francis reported that NIH convened a meeting recently at the request of PEPFAR to discuss HIV/AIDS palliative care in Africa. Discussion entailed comparison of expertise between African and U.S. palliative experts. The meeting concluded that there are not enough palliative care specialists in Africa.

Framework for Global Health: FIC's Dr. Flora Katz provided a brief overview of a new FIC Program Announcement, "Framework Programs for Global Health", which is currently in the ENS (TPA-05-042). The goal of the Program is to act as a catalyst within universities in the US and in developing countries who wish to develop integrated programs in Global Health. These Programs are expected to bring together researchers already working in the global health area to carry out joint teaching, curriculum development, and other activities ("gluing functions"); to attract new researchers into the field of Global Health; and to attract a new generation of students to choose careers in Global Health (the "pipeline"). Applications must represent a multi-disciplinary coalition at the university. To ensure sustainability, applications must show significant support from the University leadership for creating such a program, as evidenced through matching funds or in kind contributions. As a pre-requisite for the gluing function, universities must have a minimum number of current NIH-funded grants in global health areas. Two-year planning grants will be offered in the first year for developing country institutions. Full grants will be \$100K direct costs/year for three years. The PA uses the R25 mechanism.

Other Announcements: FIC's Dr. Ana Chepelinsky and NLM's Ms. Julia Royall invited all the IC representatives to send Ms. Royall all .pdf documents that are available in Spanish so that NLM may develop a single-source website for NIH Spanish-language publications.

- Mr. Rob Eiss, FIC Senior Advisor and Acting Director, FIC Division of International Relations, reported on the efforts being undertaken by the Office of the Surgeon General to develop a "Call to Action" on Global Health as well as a proposed Surgeon General's report on Global Health that will be announced or developed in the coming months. ICs wishing to comment on the draft should contact Mr. Eiss directly.
- NICHD's Ms. Eva Sereghey provided information on the NICHD-Gates Foundation Global Network for Women's and Children's Health Research and noted that NICHD would soon be re-announcing grant opportunities related to this initiative.

Attendance:

Dr. Sharon Hrynkow, FIC Acting Director; Mr. George Herrfurth, Executive Secretary; Ms. Eva Sereghy, NICHD; Dr. Lana Shekim, NIDCD; Dr. Lois Cohen, NIDCR; Ms. Julia Royall, NLM; Drs. Karl Western and Michael Hollingdale, NIAID; Dr. Yuan Liu and Ms. Stacey Chambers, NINDS; Dr. James McKearney, NCI; Ms. Julia Royall, NLM; Dr. Jose Serrano, NIDDK; Dr. Ruth Hegyeli, NHLBI; Dr. John Haller, NIBIB; Dr. Philip Chen, OD/OIR; Ms. Claudia Conti, Mr. John Whitaker, NEI; Dr. Peggy Murray, NIAAA; Dr. Karen Babich, NIMH; Ms. Claudia Conti, OAR; Dr. Bruce Altevogt, IOM; Ms. Chris Elfring, NAS; Ms. Sally Brandel, State Department.
FIC staff: Dr. Ken Bridbord, Dr. Jean Flagg Newton, Ms. Thandi Onami, Dr. Zakir Bengali, Mr. Rob Eiss, Dr. Ana Chepelinsky, Ms. Sonja Madera; Mr. James Kim; Dr. Skip Francis; Dr. Flora Katz; Dr. Aron Primack; Dr. Paul Brounstein.