

**The NIH Director's
Council of *Public Representatives* (COPR)**

Communications Work Group

Presentation to the Director

April 21, 2006

Presented by

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Rationale for Communications Work Group

The Communications Work Group formed because COPR recognized the need to increase communication of the NIH's purpose, mission, and vision to the public.

Recommendations from October 2005

The Communications Work Group made recommendations on the following areas:

- NIH Identity
- Congressional Communication and Education
- Media Outreach
- Other Outreach

NIH Identity

Recommendation

- Hold a special meeting with IC directors and key communication staff from each IC to come to consensus on NIH communication practices and priorities

NIH Response

- Dr. Zerhouni met with IC directors for the first time in November 2005 and again last week to talk about a combined communications effort

Congressional Communication and Education

Recommendation

- Outreach to policymakers (local, state, federal) to educate about and increase awareness of the NIH

NIH Response

- NIH is actively responding and educating
- Dr. Zerhouni's innovative testimony before Congress
- NIH participated in a series of regional education efforts and plans to continue to do so in 2006 and 2007

Media Outreach

Recommendation

- Increase outreach to popular, mainstream, and consumer-oriented media

NIH Response

- COPR commends Dr. Zerhouni's "Take the Gloves Off" interview in *Research Policy Alert*
- NIH developed broadcasts for local and satellite radio, podcasting, and local television

Other Outreach

Recommendation

- Increase efforts to put a face on scientific research with personal narratives in all communication pieces

NIH Response

- NIH is working on a communications plan that clearly involves personal narratives. As an example, Dr. Zerhouni included a patient story in his testimony before Congress. The patient also attended the hearing.

NIH Communications Plan

Impressive news regarding:

- Communication goals
- Message testing
- Focus groups
- Active steps toward outreach, e.g., fact sheets, proactive press coverage, and working with scientific member organizations

Where Do We Go From Here

Despite excellent progress,
many challenges remain.

Where Do We Go From Here

“There isn’t much knowledge among members of Congress and their staffs about the NIH and its mission.”

—Appropriations Staff member
AAMC Reporter, February 2006

Where Do We Go From Here

“The NIH budget is expected to be \$28.6 billion for FY 2007, a 0.1% decrease from last year, or a 3.8% decrease after adjustment for inflation—the first true budgeted reduction in NIH support since 1970.”

— Dr. Joseph Loscalzo

New England Journal of Medicine

“The NIH Budget and the Future of Biomedical Research”

April 21, 2006

Recommendations

- COPR affirms the progress on the NIH communications plan and the need for resources to communicate medical research information to the public
- COPR would like to continue to play an integral role in communications—a larger role

Recommendations

- The Communications Work Group would like to be a point of contact for the public perspective in the new clinical research awareness and education campaign

Recommendations

- Work with the appropriate NIH office to develop a COPR Community Ambassador program
- Work with the NIH on outreach messages to the public

Recommendations

- Urge NIH grantees to communicate with and educate their communities (publics) about the NIH's purpose, mission, and vision
- Provide tools and training to help grantees in their communication efforts

Recommendations

- COPR affirms and urges continued focus on proactive outreach—especially at the regional level

Example: Involve COPR members in planned regional educational events

Recommendations

- Continue to put a personal face on the NIH research enterprise
- Continue to refine the new paradigm of how NIH communicates its story

The Future...

... Help, hope, and healing