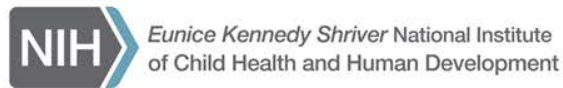


Communications at NICHD

Paul Williams
Director, Office of Communications



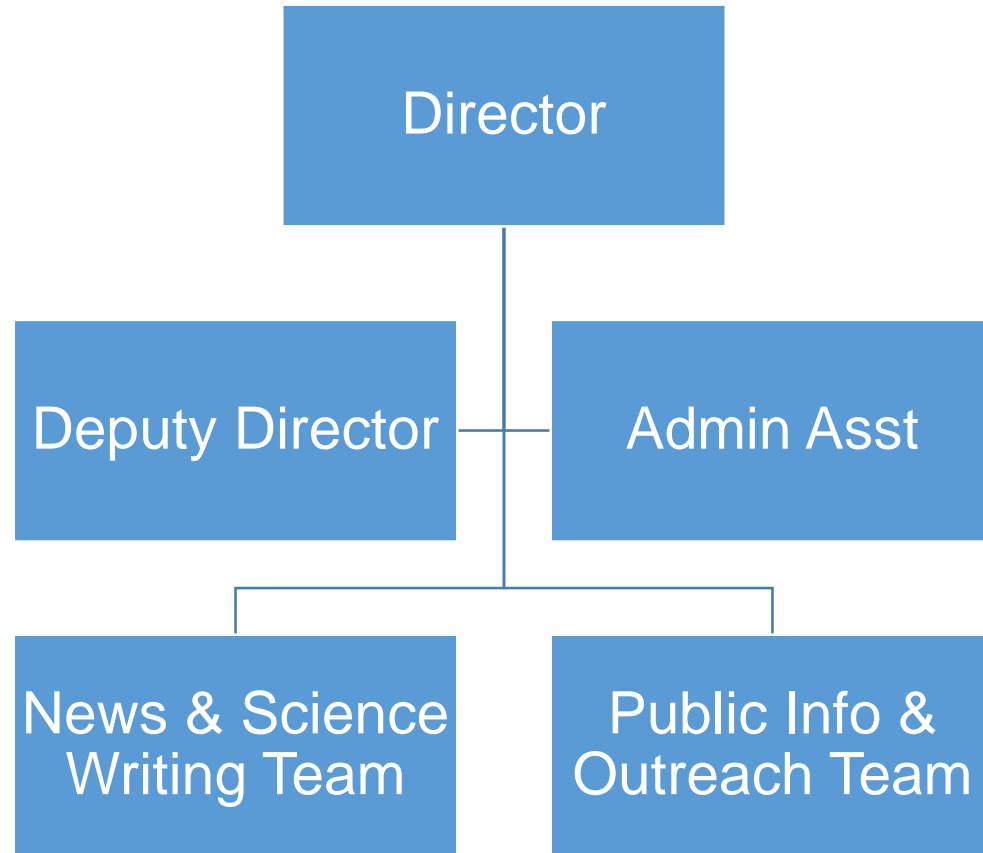


About me

- Started at NICHD in January 2015, after more than a decade in NIAID communications
- 20+ years experience in Journalism and Corporate, Government communications
 - Began career as a technology reporter in Silicon Valley, moved on to several internet startups
- **Fun facts:** proud father of two daughters (ages 8 and 11), snowboarder, harmonica player, terrible golfer



About the Office of Communications





OC functions

News and Science Writing

- Media relations
- Writing and editing
- Crisis communications/
strategic messaging
- Video development
- Website content
management
- Newsletters

Public Information & Outreach

- Communications
planning
- Public health awareness
campaigns
- Freedom of Information
Act (FOIA)
- Public inquiry response
- Publications about NICHD
science



So Why Do We Need
Communications, Anyway?



We have important stories to tell

- NICHD mission is essential and applies to a large portion of our society
 - The knowledge you generate helps us understand our world and sometimes helps us intervene when things go awry
- People are watching: public, media, advocacy groups, etc.
- Communications help influence perceptions about NICHD among these audiences
- Our content/materials help convey that the public's sizable investment in NICHD continues to achieve significant returns



We live in interesting times



- Rejection/distrust of science, expertise (vaccines, climate, GMOs)
- Fewer trained reporters, editors (“citizen journalism”)
- Dr. Google
- Misinformation at your fingertips
- Many competing for the almighty eyeball:
 - Standards are lower
 - Conflict, controversy, and iconoclasts
 - Shock value, going viral, click bait



We live in interesting times (cont.)

- Content is in high demand:
 - 24-hour news cycle (Example: news segments devoted to reading tweets on the air)
 - Internet-connected mobile devices are ubiquitous
- We need to help meet this demand with stories of research discovery/progress
- We need to reach people where they are (living room, waiting room, subway, etc.)
- Bottom line: The more we share, the more compelling our overall story becomes



How Do We Communicate?



Reaching the news media

NEWS RELEASES

Tuesday, August 23, 2016

New strategy holds promise for detecting bacterial infections in newborns

NIH-supported study could improve diagnosis, treatment for infants with fevers.



Researchers supported by the National Institutes of Health have shown that it's possible to diagnose a bacterial infection from a small sample of blood — based on the immune system's response to the bacteria — in infants with fevers who are 2 months of age or younger. With additional research, the new technique could be an improvement over the standard method, which requires isolating live bacteria from blood, urine or spinal fluid and growing them in a laboratory culture. The study, funded in part by NIH's *Eunice Kennedy Shriver* National Institute of Child Health and Human Development (NICHD), appears in the Aug. 23, 2016, issue of the *Journal of the American Medical Association*.

Health care providers who evaluate young infants with fevers have limited means to quickly and accurately diagnose whether or not an illness results from a bacterial infection. Determining if the illness is caused by bacteria may involve complicated medical procedures, such as a lumbar puncture (spinal tap). While they wait for the test results, physicians also may need to admit the infant for a lengthy hospital stay or prescribe antibiotics, which may later turn out to be unnecessary.

"The development of a fast and noninvasive diagnostic tool holds promise for better outcomes and lower treatment costs for young infants with fevers of unknown cause," said Valerie Maholmes, Ph.D., chief of NICHD's Pediatric Trauma and Critical Illness Branch.

"The development of a fast and noninvasive diagnostic tool holds promise for better outcomes and lower treatment costs for young infants with fevers of unknown cause."

—Valerie Maholmes, Ph.D., Chief, NICHD's Pediatric Trauma and Critical Illness Branch

- Monitor scientific papers/articles generated by NICHD intramural & extramural
- Work internally to determine newsworthiness
- Draft and vet releases internally and with institutional PIOs
- Send to reporters worldwide
- nichdpress@mail.nih.gov



Reaching the news media (cont.)

- Targeted, personal outreach to reporters
- Podcasts (think NPR-type interviews)
- Inbound media inquiries, consultation, messaging
- Basic workflow: internal discussion, drafting, vetting with program et al, and then dissemination
- **Fun fact:** AP placenta article (8/16) had over 568 million impressions (result of pitch)

AP / August 11, 2016, 3:03 PM

Studies shine light on mysteries of the placenta



Research and Development Engineer Avinash Eranki examines a donated placenta as researchers are working to create a 3D bioprinted version to study preeclampsia at Children's National Medical Center, in Washington, Wednesday, June 15, 2016. Researchers are looking into how problems with the placenta lead to health threats from preeclampsia to Zika. / **AP PHOTO/ANDREW HARNIK**

[Comment](#) / [Share](#) / [Tweet](#) / [Stumble](#) / [Email](#)

WASHINGTON -- Scientists carefully probe a placenta donated after birth, bluish umbilical cord still attached. This is the body's most mysterious organ, and inside lie clues to how this giver of life forms - and how it can go awry, leading to stillbirth, **preterm birth**, even infections like the **Zika virus** that somehow sneak past its protective barrier.

In labs around the country, major research is underway to finally understand and monitor this floppy, bloody tissue that's often dismissed as the "afterbirth," the organ that lives about nine months and then gets thrown away.



Going direct

- Direct messaging to the public, bypassing media
- Thought-leader blogs
- Past topics include Zika, Human Placenta Project, benefits of reading to children, rehab research, reducing youth violence

THE BLOG

Research Needed to Help Treat Children Affected by Zika

06/21/2016 05:26 pm ET | Updated Jun 21, 2016

Like 218

Catherine Y. Spong

Acting Director, Eunice Kennedy Shriver National Institute of Child Health and Human Development (NICHD), OB-GYN, maternal-fetal medicine specialist, researcher, mother



ASSOCIATED PRESS

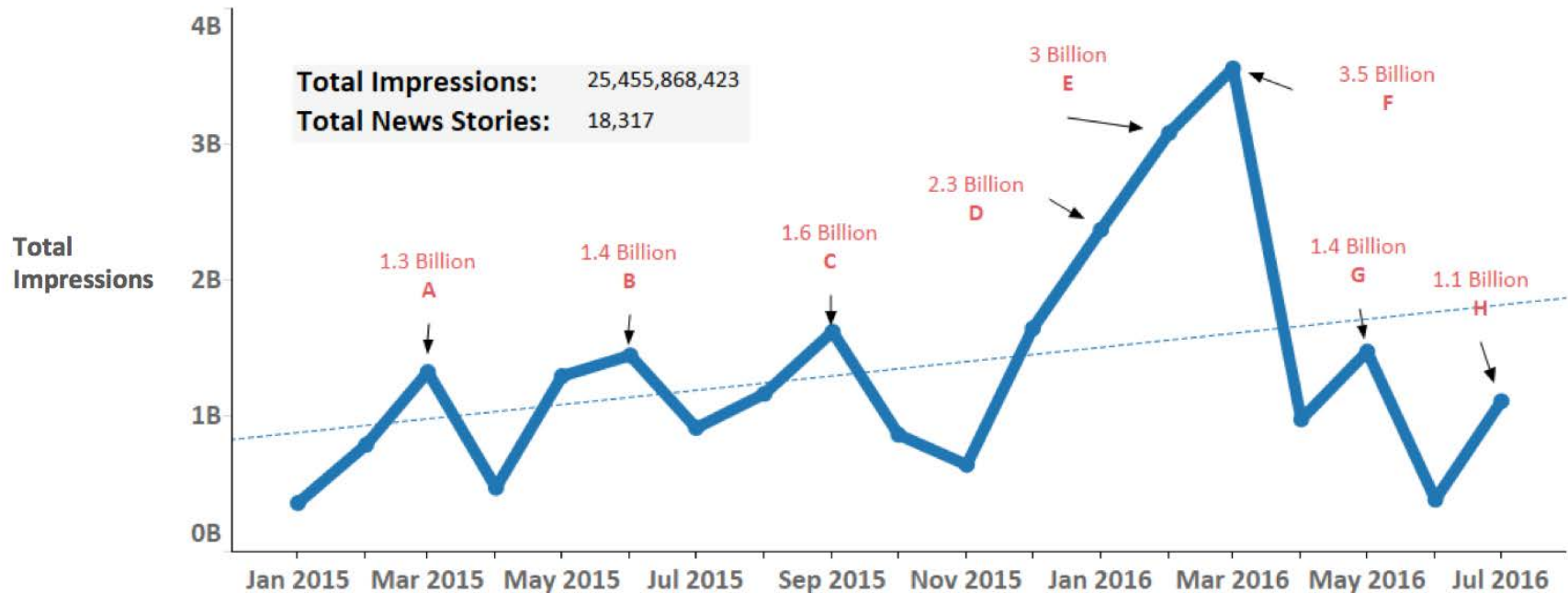
When the Zika virus epidemic erupted in Brazil last year, public health officials took swift action because the virus was linked to an alarming birth defect: microcephaly, a condition in which babies are born with very small heads and possible neurological damage.

We know now that Zika virus infection, which is spread primarily through the bite of an infected mosquito, is a cause of microcephaly and other serious developmental defects, and has been linked to other problems, including miscarriages and stillbirth.

Rethink Chronic Migraine
Talk to your doctor
START HERE



Media Mentions: Trends—January 2015 to July 2016



Top story: **“Couples’ pre-pregnancy caffeine consumption linked to miscarriage risk”** (March 2016):

- More than 1.3 billion impressions or nearly 40% of NICHD total for the month



2016 YTD media mentions

- Over 25.4 billion total impressions (~3.33 views for every person on the planet):
 - January: **“Pre-pregnancy potato consumption may be linked to gestational diabetes risk”** drove more than 1 billion impressions or nearly 43% of total for the month
 - February: **“Vaginal ring provides partial protection from HIV in large multinational trial”** generated more than 1 billion impressions or more than 33% of total for the month
 - July: **“NIH funds Zika virus study involving U.S. Olympic team”** resulted in more than 361 million impressions or nearly 33% of total for the month



Harnessing social media

NIH
NICHD

TWEETS 5,186 FOLLOWING 1,521 FOLLOWERS 6,716 LIKES 481

NICHD News & Info @NICHD_NIH
Advancing research to improve health through the lifespan. Follows/retweets ≠ endorsement. Privacy: go.usa.gov/ZbaG
Bethesda, Maryland
nichd.nih.gov
Joined September 2011

Tweet to NICHD News & Info

8 Followers you know

NIH NIAID NIAID NIMH

NIH NIBIB

Tweets Tweets & replies Media

NICHD News & Info @NICHD_NIH · 31m
Quotes #NICHD Acting Director Dr. Spong on the importance of following impact of #Zika on children long term.

The New York Times @nytimes
Zika's calamitous attack on the brains of babies — as seen from the inside
nyti.ms/2c64EMK

NICHD News & Info @NICHD_NIH · 24h
NICHD-supported study describes new genetic strategy for diagnosing bacterial infections in newborns. bit.ly/2bdVrz8

- Interact directly with the public
- Fast, inexpensive promotion and dissemination (esp. for grantee studies, campaigns)
- Share messages graphics/videos to attract people to NICHD science
- Follow us on Facebook, Twitter, Pinterest, YouTube



- **FB: ~18,900** followers
 - Launched in 2012
 - NIAID (launched 2008): ~40,200
 - NIDDK: ~26,100
 - NIAMS: ~7,500
- **Twitter: ~6,600** followers
 - Launched in 2014
 - NIAID (launched 2008): ~31,800
 - NIDDK: ~908
 - NIAMS: ~8,100

NICHD Facebook Activity, January-July 2016	
Followers	Total: 18,911 New followers per month: 310
Posts	Total: 376 Per month: 54
Reach	Total: 95,383 Per post: 2,541
Likes	Total: 13,737 Per post: 37
Comments	Total: 897 Per post: 2.4
Shares	Total: 3,807 Per post: 10

NICHD Twitter Activity, January-July 2016	
Followers	Total: 6,633 New followers per month: 153
Tweets	Total: 941 Per month: 134
Impressions	Total: 1,381,654 Per tweet: 1,468
Retweets	Total: 2,383 Per tweet: 2.5
Likes	Total: 1,739 Per tweet: 1.8
Mentions	Total: 906 Per month: 129



Reddit example



- Social discussion website with sub-channels devoted to various topics, including science
- On 9/9, Dr. Spong did an Ask Me Anything chat about Zika virus and pregnancy:
 - 428 questions/comments
 - Answered 18 in 90 minutes
 - During day, ranked as high as #2 on Reddit homepage
 - Better moderation, questions than other venues
 - Longer, in-depth answers



NICHDdevelopments

The screenshot shows the top portion of an email newsletter. At the top left is the title "NICHDdevelopments" in a large, blue, sans-serif font. To its right is the NIH logo (a stylized "NIH" in a blue box) followed by the text "Eunice Kennedy Shriver National Institute of Child Health and Human Development" in a smaller, grey font. Below this is a navigation bar with links for "NICHD HOME", "SUBSCRIBE" (with an external link icon), and "UNSUBSCRIBE" (with an external link icon). A dark blue horizontal bar below the navigation contains a white circular icon with a right-pointing arrow and the word "NEWS" in white, uppercase letters. The main content area features two news items. The first item has a circular image of a blue-tinted X-ray of a hand. To its right is the headline "[X-linked brittle bone disease discovered by NICHD, international, researchers](#)" in blue text. Below the headline is a short paragraph: "NICHD researchers, along with colleagues from Thailand and Switzerland, discovered a form of osteogenesis imperfecta, or brittle bone disease, resulting from a gene defect on the X chromosome." The second item has a circular image of a pregnant woman in a pink shirt. To its right is the headline "[NIH's Zika in pregnancy study: report from Puerto Rico](#)" in blue text. Below the headline is a short paragraph: "NICHD's Nahida Chakhtoura, M.D., recently returned from Puerto Rico after visiting with NICHD-supported researchers who are studying Zika in pregnancy and fetal development."

- Monthly roundup of news, funding opps
- **4,673** subscribers YTD
- Open rate = **35%**
(avg. govt ~21%)
- Click rate = **9.1%**
(avg. govt 2.5%)
- Interested?
<http://go.usa.gov/xDp5m>



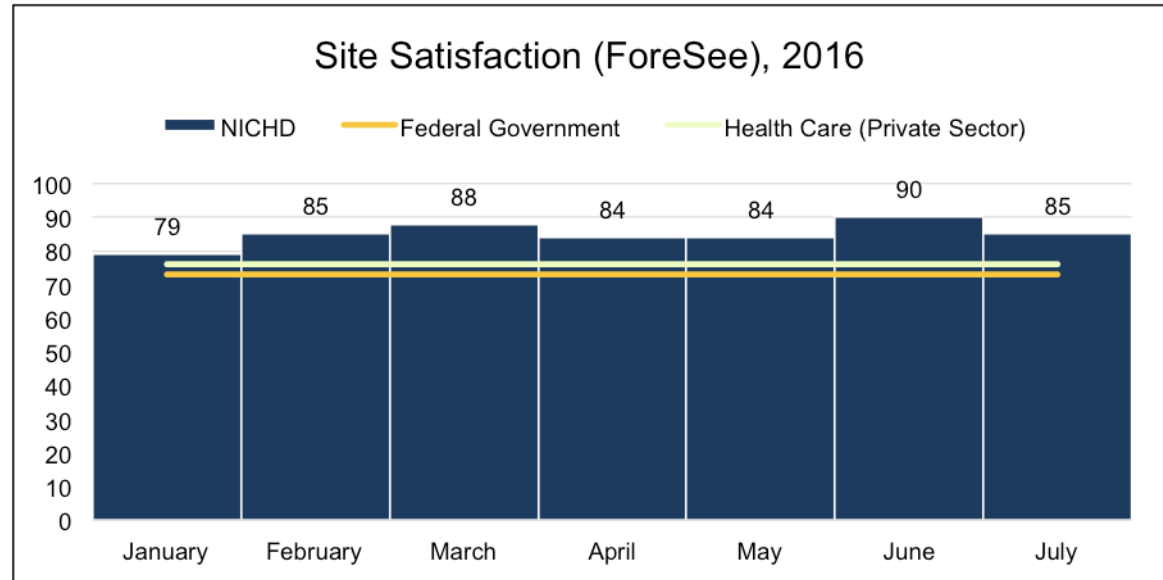
NICHD website

- Latest news, org. info, funding, intramural labs, etc.
- Most popular section: A to Z Topics (centrally located info about mission-related issues and conditions)
- Fully responsive on mobile devices as of early 2016

The screenshot shows the NICHD website homepage. At the top left is the NIH logo and the text "Eunice Kennedy Shriver National Institute of Child Health and Human Development" with the tagline "Health research throughout the lifespan". On the top right, there is a search bar, a "Director" link, and social media icons for Facebook, Twitter, and YouTube. Below the header is a navigation menu with categories: Health & Research, Grants & Funding, Training, Education & Career Development, News & Media, and About NICHD. A secondary navigation bar includes "Email Page" and "Print Page". The main banner features a blue-tinted image of a human torso with two yellow adrenal glands highlighted. The text "Adrenal glands: What do they do?" is displayed on the right side of the banner. Below the banner is a "View All Slides" link and a quote: "What you don't know might surprise you." The main content area is divided into sections. On the left, there are five tabs: "For Parents, Patients & Caregivers", "For Researchers", "For Health Care Providers", "For Educators", and "For Small Businesses". The "For Parents, Patients & Caregivers" tab is active, showing a photo of a family and a list of links: "A-Z Health and Research Topics", "Clinical trials", "Multimedia", "Publications & materials", "Safe to Sleep® Campaign", "NICHD on Facebook", "Get email updates", and "All info for parents, patients, and families". Below this is a "What's New?" section with a photo of hands holding a small object and a headline: "New strategy holds promise for detecting bacterial infections in newborns (August 23, 2016)". The text below the headline reads: "Researchers supported by NICHD have shown that it's possible to diagnose a bacterial infection, in infants with fevers who are 2 months of age or younger, by detecting the immune system's response to the bacteria in a small sample of blood." On the right side of the page, there is a yellow box for "Información en español" and a "Director's Corner" section featuring a photo of Catherine Y. Spong, M.D., with her title: "Acting Director, Obstetrician/Gynecologist, Maternal-Fetal Medicine Specialist, Researcher, Mom". Below this is a link: "Research is needed to help treat children affected by Zika." At the bottom right, there is a "Research at NICHD" section with a photo of laboratory equipment and the text: "Learn about NICHD's labs and".



- Approx. **50/50** desktop vs. mobile users
- **~75 percent** of traffic comes from search engines
- Popular topics: Safe to Sleep, STDs/STIs, contraception, adrenal gland disorders
- NLM is top referrer, followed by NIH, CDC
- Of our social sites, Facebook refers the most, followed by Pinterest





Spanish website

NIH Eunice Kennedy Shriver National Institute of Child Health and Human Development

Escriba aquí el término que desea buscar **Buscar**

Investigaciones sobre la salud | Noticias y multimedia | Actividades y proyectos | Acerca del NICHD

Inicio

Infografía: Mitos sobre el embarazo.
[Les más sobre los mitos del embarazo.](#)

¿Cuáles son las causas de las enfermedades de transmisión sexual?
El NICHD es pionero en esfuerzos para detectar trastornos tratables en los recién nacidos.
[Preguntas y respuestas sobre el VIH/SIDA](#)

Compartir:
¿Qué es el NICHD?
El Instituto Nacional de la Salud Infantil y Desarrollo Humano Eunice Kennedy Shriver (NICHD, por sus siglas en inglés) es una agencia del gobierno federal que realiza investigaciones sobre temas de salud.
Creado en 1962, el Instituto es parte de los Institutos Nacionales de la Salud (NIH, por sus siglas en inglés) del Departamento de Salud y Servicios Humanos de los Estados Unidos.
[Más información en inglés](#)

Ver todas las dispositivos

Investigaciones sobre la salud | Noticias y multimedia | Actividades y proyectos

¿Qué hace el NICHD?
El Instituto apoya y realiza investigaciones sobre temas relacionados con la salud de los niños, los adultos, las familias y las comunidades, incluyendo:

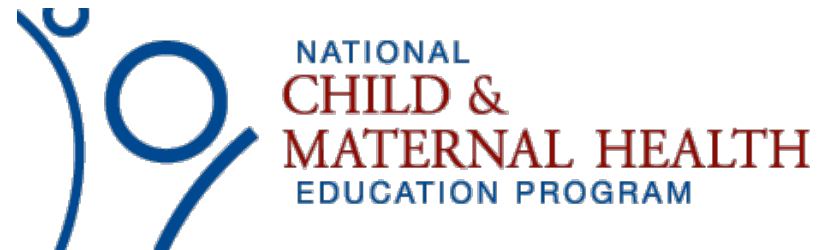
- reducción de las muertes infantiles
- promoción de embarazos y partos saludables
- investigación del crecimiento y el desarrollo
- investigación de los problemas de los defectos de nacimiento y las discapacidades intelectuales y del desarrollo
- entendimiento de la salud reproductiva
- mejora de la salud y el bienestar de los niños, las mujeres y los hombres
- mejora del funcionamiento y participación a lo largo de la vida a través de la investigación de la rehabilitación.

- A to Z Topics, press releases translated and designed for Spanish speakers
- Roughly **45,000** unique visits per month
- Popular topics: Contraception, adrenal gland disorders, STDs/STIs (similar to English site)
- Primary referrers: search engines (~**60%**), social media (mostly FB)



Outreach

- Evidence-based campaigns and programs to disseminate health messaging to target audiences
- Health care providers, parents, family members, etc.
- Depending on program, goals are to raise awareness, influence behavior change, and increase adoption of evidence-based health practices
- Includes efforts to share NICHD science with different communities, such as providers (e.g., nurses) and at-risk groups (e.g., American Indian/Alaska Natives)





Outreach (cont.)



- The **NICHD Information Resource Center (IRC)** is a critical piece of our outreach
- Direct interaction with the public: ordering NICHD publications, asking questions pertaining to health and other areas
 - In 2015, IRC fielded more than 1,500 inquiries re: animal welfare
- Also engages the public at health fairs, conferences, meetings

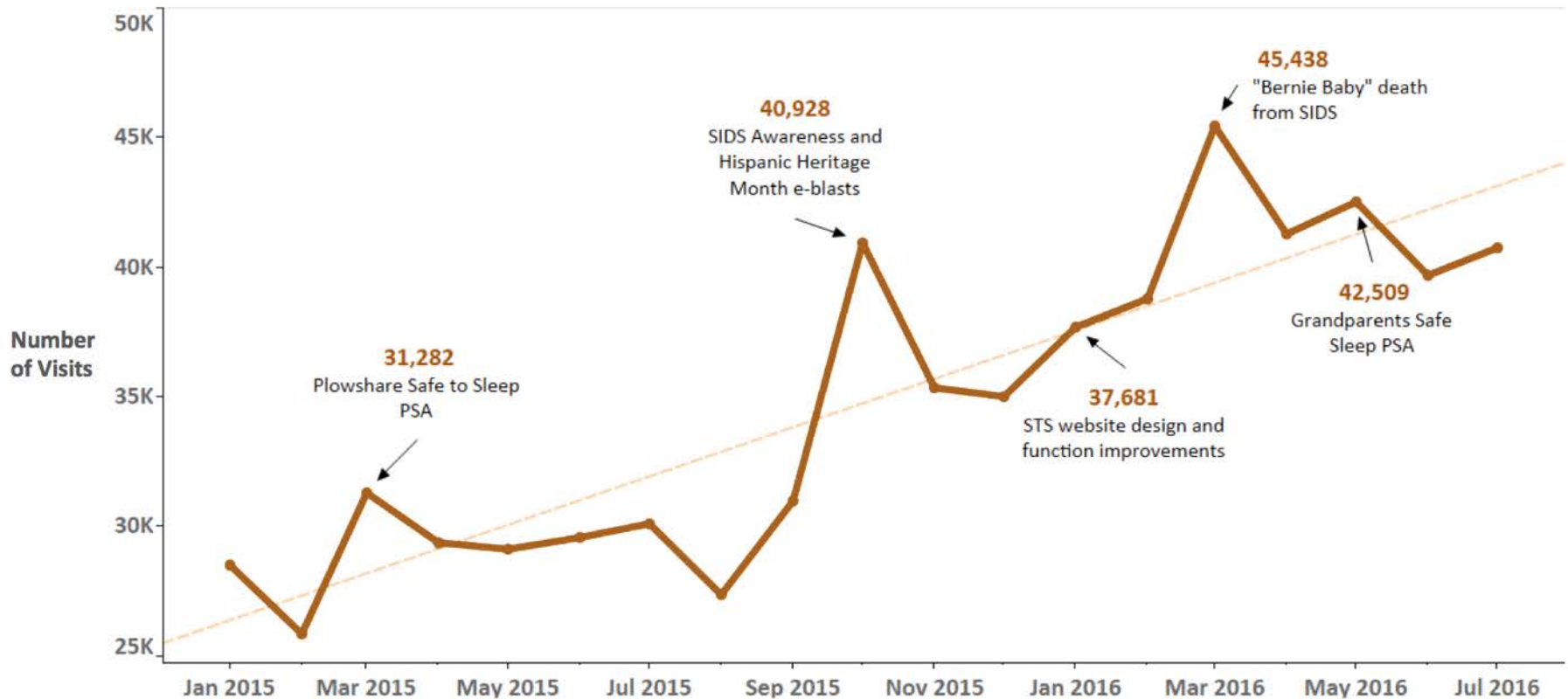


2016 YTD outreach highlights

- NCMHEP launch of Moms' Mental Health Matters:
 - Medscape CE/CME (launched 8/10): 12,040 health care providers took the course (1,899 physicians and 9,820 nurses and nurse practitioners)
- STS launch of video PSA targeting grandparents:
 - Airing in health care provider offices in states with high rates of SUID/SIDS deaths (AL, AR, KY, WV, OK, LA, MS, SC)
 - 365 offices for 8 weeks (August 8 to October 2) = 720 spots and 861,400 impressions (adults 18+)
- STS online nurse's CE activity (revised 2015):
 - 2014 = 7,272 participants, 2015 = 9,376
 - YTD 2016 = more than 13,000 have passed the course



Safe to Sleep® Campaign: Web Traffic—January 2015 to July 2016



- **Fun fact:** FAQs = most visited page during traffic spikes (indicating search engine referral, Dr. Google effect)



2016 YTD outreach highlights (cont.)

- MSY completed its mini-grant program to 50 groups across United States:
 - Teen leaders teach after-school curriculum to other kids
 - Focus on healthy eating habits, reading food labels, understanding food advertising
- As of July, IRC fielded 13,716 inquiries (~94/business day) and distributed 1.8M publications:
 - 84% of pub orders come from individuals. Of these, nurses (21%) and educators (16%) order most often
- NICHD exhibited at 6 meetings of professional societies and 2 health fairs



Freedom of Information Act (FOIA)

- All hail Earl Blansfield!
- Avg. case is 200-400 pages
- Larger ones = 1,500-2,000; can include photo/video
- Largest = **30,700 pages or 1,228 lbs. of paper (> ½ ton)**
- Work efficiently to capture, review, and release documents





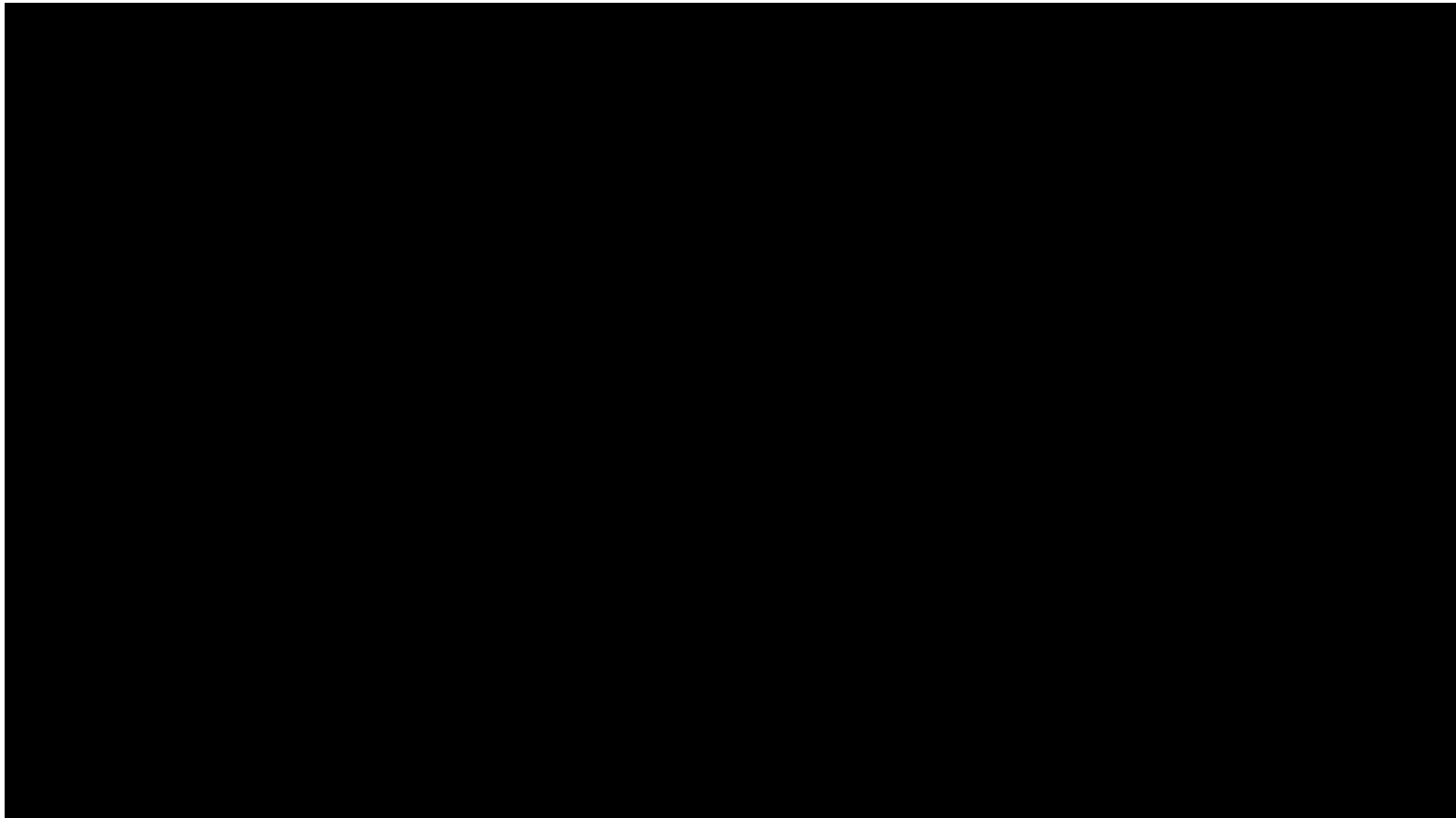
Some Words About Video



Using video for storytelling

- Shows human side of NICHD, puts a face to a name
- Asks less of the user (watch vs. read)
- Can be done in-house at much lower cost
- Works for both intramural and grantee research

The screenshot shows the NICHD YouTube channel page. At the top is a banner image with the NIH and NICHD logos on the left and a close-up of a person's face with a red liquid sample in a container on the right. Below the banner is the channel name "NICHDVideos" and navigation tabs for Home, Videos, Playlists, Channels, Discussion, and About. The main video featured is "Launching the Zika in Infants and Pregnancy (ZIP) Study", which has 735 views and was posted 2 months ago. The video thumbnail shows a pregnant woman in a hospital bed talking to a doctor. A subtitle at the bottom of the thumbnail reads: "what is the risk of having Zika virus on pregnancy, and we need to be able to tell". To the right of the video is a description: "Launching the Zika in Infants and Pregnancy (ZIP) Study" with 735 views 2 months ago. The description states: "Zika in Infants and Pregnancy (ZIP) is a multi-country study that will evaluate the magnitude of health risks that Zika virus infection poses to pregnant women and their developing fetuses and infants." It also includes a link to learn more: "To learn more about the ZIP study or to view a text alternative of the video, visit: <https://www.nichd.nih.gov/n...>" and a "Read more" link. Below the main video is an "Uploads" section with two video thumbnails. The first is "The Road to Babyville" (1:20), posted 1 week ago with 313 views, with a description about pregnancy emotions. The second is "Developing Lifelong Learners: Math Skills" (0:59), posted 1 month ago with 570 views, with a description about helping children become lifelong learners.





Questions?
pwilliams@mail.nih.gov



Extra Slides



OC functions (cont.)

Deputy Director

- Overall contract management
- Editorial policy and procedure
- Logo usage and implementation
- Assistance with day-to-day operations
- Website liaison
- Special projects (e.g., hallway, PregSource)



Audiences

Primary

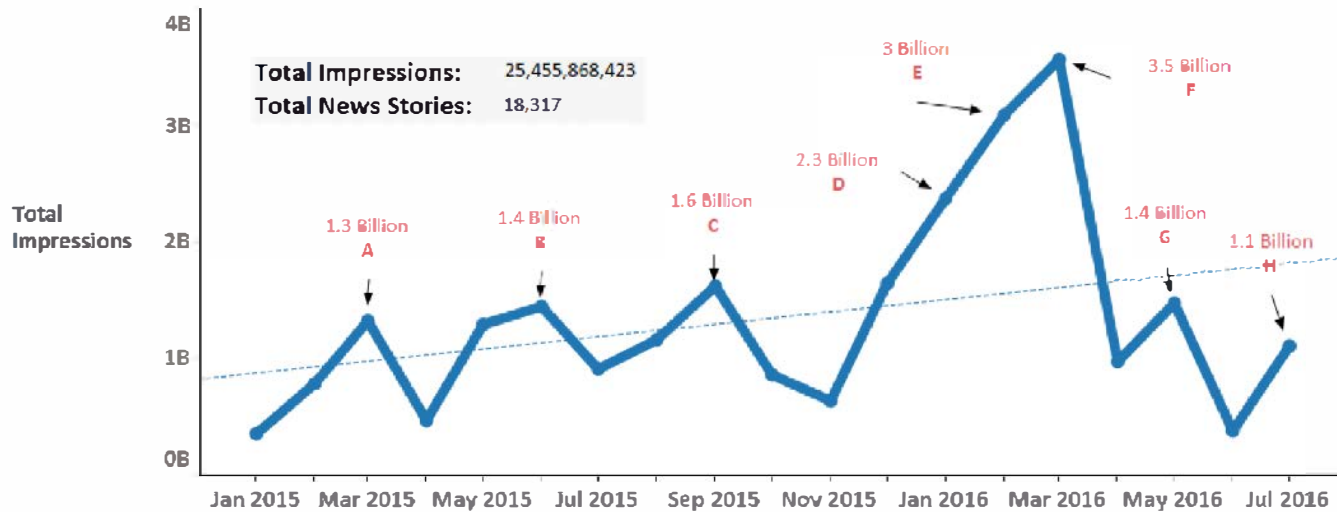
- General public (English- and Spanish-speaking)
- Parents, patients, and caregivers
- News media, including bloggers
- Researchers, trainees, and grantee institutions
- Health care providers and professional societies
- Community partners
- NIH and other government agencies

Secondary (important, but served primarily by other parts of NICHD)

- Congress and policymakers
- NICHD employees
- NICHD advisory bodies
- Friends of NICHD and other advocacy groups



Media Mentions: Trends—January 2015 to July 2016



- A** - In March 2015, the story "El trabajo físico, la hipertensión y el consumo de múltiples medicamentos pueden disminuir la fertilidad masculina" drove over 259 million impressions, 19.7% of the month's total impressions.
- B** - In June 2015, the story "Researchers design placenta-on-a-chip to better understand pregnancy" drove over 449 million impressions, 31.1% of the month's total impressions.
- C** - In September 2015, the story "NIH study finds racial, ethnic differences in fetal growth" drove over 73 million impressions, 4.5% of the month's total impressions.
- D** - In January 2016, the story "Pre-pregnancy potato consumption may be linked to gestational diabetes risk" drove over 1 billion impressions, 42.7% of the month's total impressions.
- E** - In February 2016, the story "Vaginal Ring Provides Partial Protection from HIV in Large Multinational Trial" drove over 1 billion impressions, 33.4% of the month's total impressions.
- F** - In March 2016, the story "Couples' pre-pregnancy caffeine consumption linked to miscarriage risk" drove over 1.3 billion impressions, 39.3% of the month's total impressions.
- G** - In May 2016, the story "Zika virus damages placenta, kills fetal mice" drove over 113 million impressions, 7.7% of the month's total impressions.
- H** - In July 2016, the story "NIH funds Zika virus study involving U.S. Olympic team" drove over 361 million impressions, 32.6% of the month's total impressions.



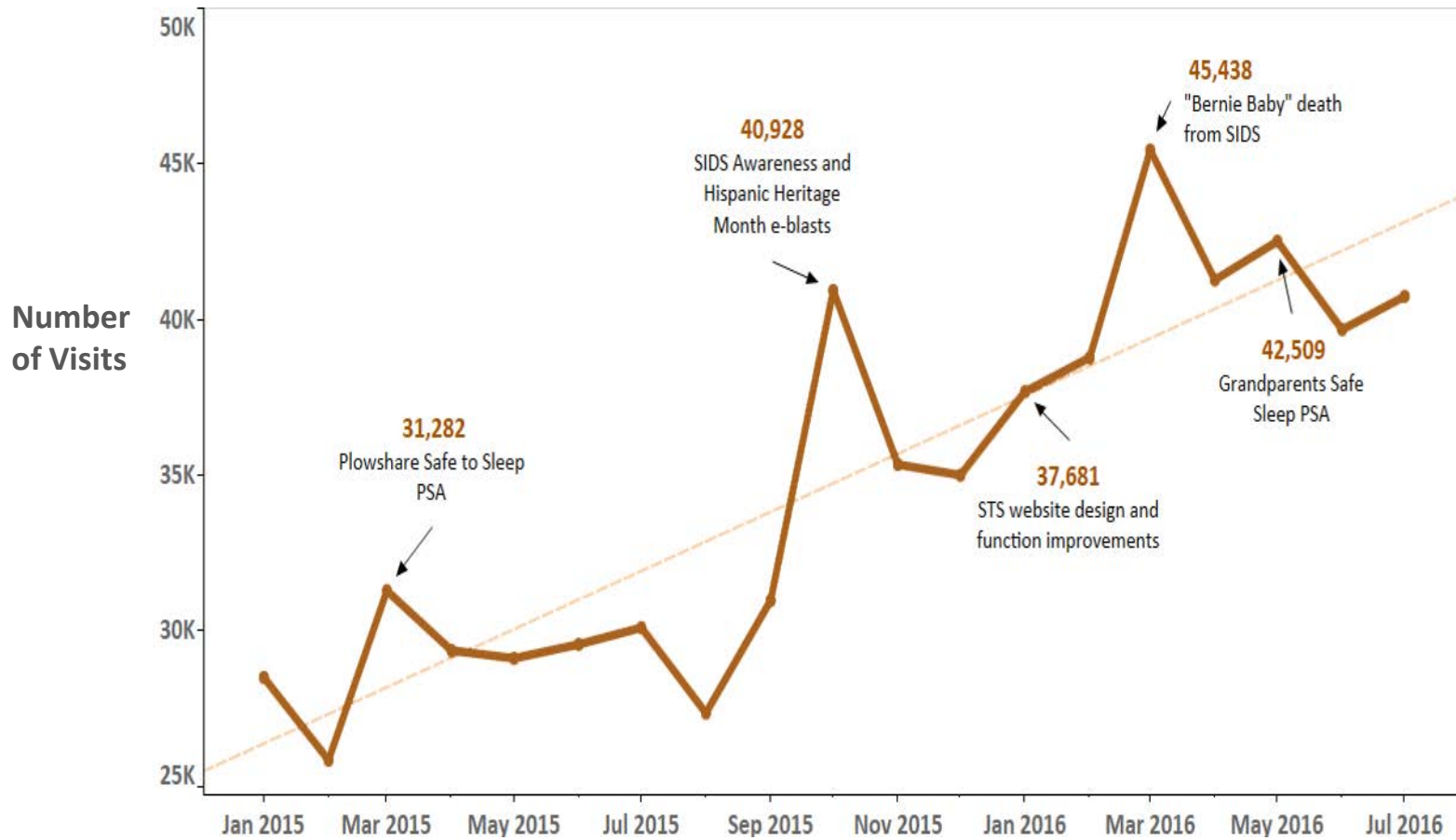
Monthly website visits, comparison

- Avg. NICHD visits = ~440,000
- Comparison of 30-day totals of other govt. websites

medlineplus.gov	41,454,112
cdc.gov	25,472,219
nhlbi.nih.gov	2,534,388
niddk.nih.gov	2,417,777
hhs.gov	1,133,678
nih.gov	1,026,037
niaid.nih.gov	325,682
nia.nih.gov	228,392
minorityhealth.hhs.gov	22,080
nlm.nih.gov	11,730
usmint.gov	491,283
ed.gov	484,383
foodsafety.gov	484,383
earthobservatory.nasa.gov	483,693
ihs.gov	474,033
pe.usps.com	471,963
mars.nasa.gov	465,063
index.va.gov	440,913
nist.gov	438,843
japanese.japan.usembassy.gov	434,703
transportation.gov	432,633
aphis.usda.gov	423,663
regulations.gov	422,973
health.mil	422,283
complaints.donotcall.gov	411,933
fws.gov	406,413
myhealthvet.va.gov	404,343
emailus.usps.com	400,203



Safe to Sleep® Campaign: Web Traffic—January 2015 to July 2016





MSY letter

Dear Media Smart Youth Team:

I am writing to tell you about the AMAZING workshop that I facilitated at a community center where I live. This year was different from the workshop last year because I had 2 other MSY Teen Leaders co-facilitate with me at the Boys & Girls Club. So this year, I was the only MSY Teen Leader and I had to work by myself with the staff at the Alive Center which has a mission to serve local teens who are interested in connecting with what makes them come alive by increasing their health and well-being. I collaborated with the Executive Director and staff at the Alive Center to plan the workshop, recruit students, and provide a fun learning environment.

There were 12 students who participated from grades 6 to 12 (most were 7th graders), and we all had fun! When I surveyed the students to find out what was the strangest food they ever made, the deep fried Oreos were the most bizarre. **The exercise for reading nutrition labels was an eye-opener for everyone.** A local grocery store chain, Fresh Thyme Farmers Market provided most of the food, which the students had no problem going back for seconds and thirds.

Thank you so much for organizing the MSY Teen Leaders program! It has truly helped me to develop my passion for teaching and leading others. My next plan is to collaborate with the 4H program in my area to train student leaders at a predominantly Spanish speaking high school to be able to deliver the MSY curriculum in their community. I did not find any materials on the MSY website in Spanish. If you have some MSY materials in Spanish, I would like to make them available to the high school students I will be training to lead MSY workshop sessions. If not, I will find out if there are ways the students leading the sessions can translate the materials for parents.

Once again, thank you so much for providing the MSY curriculum for free! I have attached photos and a promotional article for your archives. <http://www.dailyherald.com/article/20160815/entlife/160819406/>

Sincerely,

Mariel Thompson
MSY Teen Leader
Naperville, Illinois