



NETWORK OF MINORITY HEALTH RESEARCH INVESTIGATORS NMRI 2012 FALL NEWS





A Message from Dr. Agodoa

This has been an extraordinary year of celebration as the Network for Minority Health Research Investigators (NMRI) marked its 10th anniversary. It has been a time to reflect on past accomplishments and plan for new opportunities. In 1999, the National Institutes of Health (NIH) recognized the need to increase the number of minority health researchers who succeed in accessing grants and contracts for research at the NIH. At that time, most of the researchers focusing on diseases of interest to the National Institute of Diabetes and Digestive and Kidney Diseases (NIDDK) were not minorities although those diseases disproportionately affected minorities. I worked with the former director of the NIDDK, Dr. Allen Spiegel, and others to design and initiate a program to address this research need. Thus, in 2002 the NMRI was established.

The success of the NMRI, a network that is “owned” by its members and supported by the NIDDK, begins with the dedication of senior investigators who mentor and serve as role models for junior investigators. The primary mission of the NMRI is to encourage minority health investigators to be researchers in fields of interest to the NIDDK. More than 300 researchers have participated in NMRI workshops in the past decade, and approximately 100 are active members. The participation of active members and recruitment of new members is a primary reason for the Network’s success in the past and the reason for confidence that it will continue to grow in the future. Inspired by the NMRI, other NIH Institutes and Centers are using the NMRI model to increase the success of minority health researchers within their own mission areas.

There never has been a health research network such as the NMRI, and it is important that members recognize that they have had an impact on the NIH and NIDDK missions to create wider opportunities for minority health investigators and support state-of-the-science research. By continuing to create a pathway to success for young investigators that includes an active mentoring program, the NMRI will realize even greater achievement in fulfilling its mission in the future. Thank you to all those who have supported and helped create this important initiative.

Lawrence Agodoa, M.D., F.A.C.P.

*Director
Office of Minority Health Research Coordination
National Institute of Diabetes and Digestive
and Kidney Disease
National Institutes of Health*



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**NMRI 11th Annual Workshop
April 18 - 19, 2013, Bethesda, MD**

**More information at
<http://nmri.niddk.nih.gov/workshops>**



10th Anniversary

The NMRI Celebrates 10 Years of Networking Excellence and Scientific Achievement

In 1999, NIH Director Dr. Harold Varmus called the new Director of the NIDDK, Dr. Allen Spiegel, into his office to discuss what could be done to increase the number of minority researchers in the United States and, in so doing (it was hoped), encourage research on health disparities. At the time, the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services (DHHS) had instituted an initiative for each of the NIH Institutes to establish programs to address these problems. Dr. Spiegel returned to the NIDDK and called Dr. Lawrence Agodoa, the Director of Chronic Kidney Disease and End Stage Renal Disease Programs and the newly appointed Director of the Office of Minority Health Research Coordination (OMHRC), to ask him to lead this new DHHS initiative for the NIDDK. Dr. Agodoa, with support from Dr. Spiegel, established the Network for Minority Health Research Investigators (NMRI) as one initiative to address the lack of minority health researchers involved in NIDDK's diseases of interest—the same diseases that were affecting U.S. minorities disproportionately.

During the next decade, the NMRI recruited, cajoled, and influenced the state of research to markedly improve participation of minority investigators in the research enterprise. Beginning with a concerted effort to enlist senior investigators to

serve as “owners” of the Network, Dr. Agodoa found a select group willing to accept the responsibility of finding and mentoring junior minority investigators. Their goal was to encourage junior researchers to enter the research fields of interest to the NIDDK. Success was not too long in coming as the NMRI became nationally known as an avenue for career promotion and peer mentoring for minority researchers that could strengthen a junior investigator's knowledge, experience, and resume.

“The NMRI workshops were the first time I saw there was a group of people like me. It made me feel less alone. Members are good role models of success for minority researchers in academia.”

Since the NMRI was established in 2002, it has grown to more than 100 active members, with another 300 who have attended at least one NMRI annual or regional workshop. As Dr. Agodoa tells each new group of workshop attendees, *“The NMRI belongs to you. The NIDDK will support the Network by funding NMRI activities like these workshops, but the Network will succeed or fail depending on the enthusiasm and hard work of its members.”*

An evolving strategy to achieve the NMRI's mission is to develop partnerships with national scientific organizations, such as the Endocrine Society, American Liver Foundation, American Society for Bone and Mineral Research, Robert

“The NMRI gave me massive help while I was applying for a faculty position. I had made some unforgivable errors in my first series of interviews. Some of the senior members of the NMRI corrected my interview style and were helpful in the next series. I am now an Assistant Professor.”

Wood Johnson Foundation, and American Physiological Society. Speakers from organizations such as these address attendees at each annual workshop, and NMRI members participate as speakers and/or breakout session leaders at national scientific meetings. In addition, the NMRI works closely with professional organizations to support their minority training activities.

After almost a decade, enough data have been collected from members to assess whether the NMRI is doing what Dr. Spiegel (and the current Director of the NIDDK, Dr. Griffin Rodgers) and Dr. Agodoa foresaw when they created the NMRI. Responses to questionnaires completed online by NMRI members indicate that a steady progression of career advancement has occurred among members, with many members attributing participation in the NMRI as a significant influence. At the same time, mentor/mentee pairings have increased from 4 to 24 from 2009 to 2011. At each NMRI workshop, members are asked to report on career promotions, successful grant applications, and number of publications. Each of these areas has increased during the past 5 years. Grant applications, a primary focus of NMRI workshop training sessions, have increased dramatically during the past decade.

Although participation in the NMRI does not guarantee success in the funding process, most members who completed the NMRI questionnaire felt that the Network's instruction and mentoring processes have improved their ability to write a winning grant application. These successes point to a bright future for meeting the NMRI's goals.

The NMRI's goal of increasing the number of minority researchers has been met in the past decade, but there still is a large gap to close before the research environment is truly representative, especially during these stressful economic times. Because the NMRI has become a model program at the NIH for increasing minority participation in medical research, other NIH Institutes are discussing how to implement similar programs. Another possibility is expanding the NMRI to include minority researchers in other disciplines, such as heart disease, cancer, and infectious diseases.

The NMRI celebrated its 10th Anniversary at the 2012 NMRI Annual Workshop, April 19–20 in Bethesda, MD (see next article). Speakers and participants looked back on progress made in increasing minority participation in medical research and looked forward to the opportunity to build on the past to continue the Network's achievements. The next 10 years hold the promise of continuing gains in research participation for minority scientists, but only if programs such as the NMRI continue to be supported by those who “own” the Network by bringing in the next generation of minority researchers, mentoring their progress, and passing on the knowledge and skills necessary to access the research enterprise.

10th Anniversary

10th Annual NMRI Workshop Celebrates the Anniversary With a Focus on the Past and the Future

The 10th Annual NMRI Workshop provided an opportunity to revisit the beginnings of the NMRI and develop enthusiasm for the future. More than 100 attendees took part in plenary and breakout sessions and heard a variety of perspectives on attaining the skills and strategies needed to pursue a research career. The 2-day workshop was held at the Pooks Hill Bethesda Marriott Hotel in Bethesda, MD, April 19–20, 2012.



Dr. Juan Sanabria

Dr. Juan Sanabria (Case Western Reserve University) chaired the workshop and opened the proceedings with a welcome to participants and a thank you to Dr. Agodoa for his foresight in creating the concept of what is now a decade-long initiative for increasing participation of minority health investigators in a network supported by the NIDDK and NIH. Dr. Sanabria reviewed the agenda and stressed that the focus of the workshop would be on what has been accomplished by the NMRI and what opportunities lay ahead.

After participants introduced themselves (a tradition at each NMRI workshop), Dr. Agodoa

recognized Dr. Jacqueline Tanaka, chair of the first NMRI Annual Workshop in 2003, and thanked all those who have served in that position during the annual and regional workshops during the past decade.



Dr. Gregory Germino

To begin the program for the workshop, **Dr. Gregory Germino**, Deputy Director of the NIDDK, congratulated the NMRI on its 10th Anniversary. He described how the Network was established and has been supported by the NIDDK because of the Institute's commitment to overcoming the challenges involved in increasing minority participation in research. He reiterated the goals of the NMRI, which include the following:

- To encourage and facilitate biomedical research within NIDDK mission areas by its members.
- To recruit new investigators from these communities to biomedical research in NIDDK mission areas.
- To promote dialogue between NMRI members and the NIDDK.

Dr. Germino welcomed participants and passed along greetings from Dr. Griffin Rodgers, Director of the NIDDK, who had a previous commitment and could not attend. He announced that on the

previous day Dr. Rodgers, a champion of the NMRI, was inducted into the 2012 class of the American Academy of Arts and Sciences, a prestigious group that is more than 200 years old and includes George Washington, Benjamin Franklin, and many other legendary figures from American history as past members.

Dr. Germino reviewed the history of the NMRI (see previous article) and emphasized the commitment of the current NIDDK Director, Dr. Griffin Rodgers, to continue to support the network. More than 300 investigators have attended NMRI annual or regional workshops, and evaluation of the program has shown continued progress in assisting members in achieving promotions in their respective fields and institutions. At present, the NMRI has 100 active members, 20 percent of whom are senior members. Eighty percent of NMRI members have faculty appointments.

The NMRI began collecting member information through the online NMRI Questionnaire in 2008 (see <http://nmri.niddk.nih.gov/membership/questionnaire.aspx>). Data collected from 2008 to 2011 indicate the achievements that would be expected from a high-energy group such as the NMRI. During that time, there have been 16 promotions/appointments; 34 members have received grants (28 from the NIH); 23 members have received honors or awards; 170 publications have been generated by members; and members have made 93 poster presentations at national and international scientific conferences.

The NMRI is only one of the NIDDK's efforts to address health disparities, which disproportionately affect racial/minority groups as well as other underrepresented populations. The NIDDK has coordinated research efforts on obesity, Type 2 diabetes (T2D), and kidney diseases, each of which are major health problems among underrepresented/disadvantaged populations. The estimated annual cost of these three conditions is \$150 billion for obesity, \$174 billion for T2D, and \$27 billion for kidney diseases. Obesity—a significant risk factor for T2D, which in turn is the most significant risk factor for kidney diseases—is increasing in the United States and internationally in the next few decades. It is likely to become the world's most significant health problem.

For the NMRI, one challenge for the future is retaining senior members who can become mentors for young investigators. As Dr. Agodoa wrote in the most recent issue of the *NMRI News*, an NMRI publication, *"The NMRI belongs to its members, and their hard work and enthusiasm for the program will dictate success or failure. The challenge will be to keep the good work of the past moving forward in the future."*

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10th Anniversary

10th Anniversary Keynote Address



Dr. Luis Ricardo Fraga

The Keynote Address was presented by **Dr. Luis Ricardo Fraga** (University of Washington). Dr. Fraga provided an overview of changing demographics in the United States and how this will impact the health care system, especially in the context of immigration poli-

cies. His message to those in the audience was that as demographics change, choices will have to be made about the type of future we want to pass along to our children and grandchildren. He congratulated the NMRI for making a difference in positively impacting the lives of so many minority and underrepresented health researchers, and said that this is the type of initiative that can lead to a common destiny for all U.S. residents.

Panel Discussion

Drs. Ann Bonham (Association of American Medical Colleges), **Kwame Osei** (The Ohio State University College of Medicine), and **Walter Schaffer** (Office of the Director, NIH) discussed race, ethnicity, and NIH awards. Their panel discussion focused on two recent peer-reviewed journal articles that looked at race, ethnicity, and NIH awards. An article by Pohlhaus et al. in

Academic Medicine examined application, success, and funding rates at the NIH (<http://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pubmed/21512358>). A second article in *Science* by Ginter et al. (<http://www.sciencemag.org/content/333/6045/1015>) looked at applicants' self-identified race or ethnicity and the probability of receiving an R01 award from the NIH. Each of these articles showed that the NIH can do more for promoting minority and underrepresented researchers in its grant process. The speakers highlighted the history of diversity awards in biomedical research at the NIH and described ongoing efforts to address health disparities issues in the research community. Dr. Schaffer described studies of education, gender, and funding trends among minority researchers as well as differences in application success rates among racial groups. The Diversity Workgroup of the NIH Director's Advisory Committee recently discussed experimental techniques that could be used during the review process to determine if biases are a contributing factor to application success rates.



(from left to right) Panelists Walter Schaffer, Kwame Osei, and Ann Bonham discussed a hot topic of the day—race, ethnicity, and NIH awards.

In the discussion period, panelists were asked questions solicited from workshop participants before the meeting. To prepare more competitive and successful applications, the panelists emphasized the importance of mentorship, grant-writing support, networking, and taking full advantage of the institutional resources available in preparing the application and conducting the research. They also fielded questions about ensuring a review process free of unconscious biases and examining the constitution of study sections. They recommended that the applicants' statements in the NIH biosketch form highlight their passion for addressing health disparities.

Scientific Presentations



(from left to right) Drs. Charmaine Stewart, Francisco Villarreal, and Marjorie Mau presented highlights from their research.

The scientific presentations highlighted excellent research being conducted by NMRI investigators in cirrhosis, T2D patients with heart failure, and the Native Hawaiian minority group. Junior Investigator **Dr. Charmaine Stewart** presented her research on the effect of cirrhosis on cognitive impairment, specifically hepatic encephalopathy, as seen in patients' poor driving performance and impaired concentration and visual-perceptual function, as well neuropsychological effects in patients with comorbid depression and particular patterns of impairment in cirrhotic patients.

Senior Investigator **Dr. Francisco Villarreal** described studies of mice and of T2D patients with Stage II heart failure who experienced improved muscle capacity when treated with epicatechin, a flavenol found in cacao.

Senior Investigator **Dr. Marjorie Mau** highlighted major research areas and trends seen in diabetes in Native Hawaiians during the past decade; she described differences in incidence rates by racial and ethnic group, body mass index, and other risk factors, as well as the prevalence of end-stage renal disease (ESRD) among this population. Dr. Mau concluded that programs of community-based lifestyle changes may be the most effective approach to address diabetes in Native Hawaiians.

During the lunch period on the first day of the workshop, NMRI members heard an address from **Dr. Jasjit S. Ahluwalia**, Associate Director of the Clinical and Translational Science Institute and Director of the Center for Health Equity at the University of Minnesota Medical School, Minneapolis, MN, titled "Career Development: Leadership for Mid-Career Professionals."



The lunch presentation was given by Dr. Jasjit S. Ahluwalia.

Dr. Ahluwalia shared his career trajectory from his early years through medical school and into several phases of his professional life, stressing the roles of his mentors along his career pathway. He encouraged attendees above all else to strive for balance and stability in their personal and professional lives, exercise, and focus on the activities that they consider to be important.

Breakout and Parallel Sessions

The tutorial sessions on the NIH study sections represent a strong educational component of

the NMRI Workshops. The 10th Annual Workshop offered three mock study sessions that included experienced researchers who previously had submitted successful grant applications. These individuals described their actual quests for funding, which typically included many unsuccessful early attempts. Each session chair received sample grant applications (some from meeting participants) to review and evaluate critically. The Scientific Review Officer (SRO) led the feedback session discussions.

The following individuals led and chaired the Mock Study Sections:

- (1) SRO **Dr. Lakshmanan Sankaran** and Chair **Dr. Susanne Nicholas**,
- (2) SRO **Dr. Barbara Woynarowska** and Chair **Dr. Sylvia Rosas**, and
- (3) SRO **Dr. Michele Barnard** and Chair **Dr. Carlos Isales**.



Mock Study Section breakout sessions were offered by (from top left to bottom right) Michele Barnard and Carlos Isales, Barbara Woynarowska and Sylvia Rosas, and Susanne Nicholas and Lakshmanan Sankaran. These sessions always are well-attended and valuable to NMRI members.

Additional parallel interactive sessions were convened on topics selected specifically for enhancing participant career paths. On community-based research and how to engage the community in research, **Dr. Beth Furlong** discussed “Community Engagement, Research, and Research Scientists”; **Mr. Wayne Houston** discussed “Black Family Health and Wellness: How to Organize an Annual Community-based Wellness Program”; and **Mr. Ira Combs** shared “The Community Nurse Perspective.”

In addition, **Dr. Ann Bonham** discussed “Comparative Effectiveness Research,” and **Dr. Anuradha Budhu** discussed “Employing Multi-level Genomic Strategies to Profile Aggressive Hepatocellular Carcinoma.” Presenters at each session provided practical information based on personal experiences and ensured that time was available to discuss attendee questions and comments.

Scientific Societies/Professional Organizations

The NMRI network is a valuable resource for investigators because volunteers both strengthen the science supporting the NIDDK mission and assist junior investigators with their career paths. The NMRI



Dr. Beth Furlong



Mr. Wayne Houston



Mr. Ira Combs



Dr. Ann Bonham



Dr. Anuradha Budhu

maintains a broad reach by developing contacts and partnerships with scientific societies and professional organizations. During the 2012 Annual Workshop, attendees heard a presentation from **Dr. Jonathan Bromberg**, professor at the University of Maryland School of Medicine, Baltimore, and chair of the American Society of Transplant Surgeons. The NMRI encourages this and other organizations to continue attending the annual workshops to provide information on their programs and the availability of funding for minority investigators.

Focus on NIH's Commitment to Health Disparities Research



Dr. Roy Wilson

Dr. Roy Wilson, Deputy Director for Strategic Scientific Planning and Program Coordination for the National Institute on Minority Health and Health Disparities (NIMHD), provided an overview of the continuing need for research on health disparities. He discussed data on life expectancy, inequality in the health care system, and racial variations in the social

determinants of health. He stressed the importance of networks such as the NMRI for developing researchers focused on health disparities, and for raising these issues to the forefront of the national health care debate. The NIMHD recently was elevated from a “Center” to an “Institute” at the NIH, thus indicating the commitment of the NIH leadership in supporting and encouraging health disparities research. He encouraged NMRI to continue to focus on mentoring and general career development to create the human resources needed to address health disparities.

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10th Anniversary

Third Annual Dr. Marco Cabrera Poster Contest Winners Announced

The “Marco Cabrera Poster and Networking Session” was held during the Annual Workshop in memory and honor of Dr. Marco Cabrera. Thirty-three posters were submitted in three categories: Basic, Clinical, and Translational Science. This was the highest number of posters yet submitted for an NMRI Annual Workshop. The 2012 posters represented outstanding research endeavors by NMRI members at numerous academic institutions. Poster abstracts spanned research on proteomics, genetics, lifestyle interventions for diabetes, estrogen receptors, depression and chronic kidney disease, health disparities, vitamin D therapy in patients with metabolic syndrome, Alzheimer’s Disease and diabetes, and an impressive number of other scientific topics. Awards for exemplary poster presentations were given on the second day of the workshop in two categories. Congratulations to the following winners:

Basic Science: **Dr. Lincoln Edwards**, for the presentation “Moxonidine and S43126 Enhance Glucose Uptake and Insulin Release in Cells.”

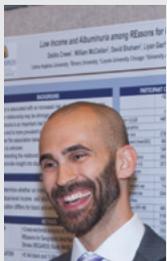
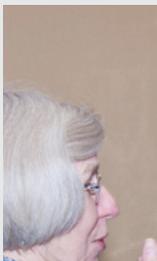
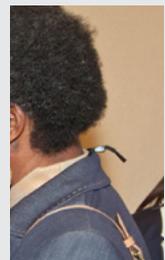
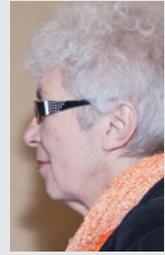
Clinical Translational Research Science: **Drs. Alicia Mangram** and **James Dzandu**, for the presentation “Increased A1C Level in Acute Care Surgical Patients Is Associated With Increased Risks of Infections at Admission, Hyperglycemia, and Prolonged Hospital Lengths of Stay.”



Poster award winners (left to right) included Lincoln Edwards, Alice Mangram, and James Dzandu. Awards were presented by (right to left) Drs. Sanabria, Agodoa, and Sceppa.

Poster Session Oral Presentations

A highlight of NMRI Annual Workshops is the selection of individuals to present on their research submitted for the “Marco Cabrera Poster and Networking Session.” For the 10th Annual Workshop, **Drs. Zeenat Lila** (South Carolina State University) and **Moises Torres-Gonzalez** (University of California, San Diego) received the honor of providing an oral presentation. Dr. Lila’s poster presentation was on the role of DNA and RNA in glycoxidation reactions that have implications in several diseases, including diabetes. Dr. Torres-Gonzalez spoke on the topic of dietary omega-3 polyunsaturated fatty acids and their relation to liver diseases and inflammation. Both of these presentations exemplify the types of research that are being conducted by NMRI members.



10th Anniversary

News From the NMRI Oversight Committee



Dr. Virginia Sarapura discusses the NMRI Mentoring Program

The NMRI Oversight Committee consists of 10 members from various NMRI constituencies. The Committee is mandated to develop a program that supports active mentoring between senior and junior members, facilitates outreach, establishes Network member groups based on interests and goals, and matches mentors with mentees. Committee members conduct business via three conference calls per year and a face-to-face meeting at the Annual Workshop. The Committee has accomplished several significant initiatives during the past year, including:

- Monitoring the specific outcomes and progress of the formalized mentoring program for member career development.
- Identifying specific learning activities.
- Scheduling focus groups to brainstorm ideas for recruiting and retaining NMRI members.
- Producing a DVD for use in recruiting new members that, with member consent, will be posted on the NIDDK website and included in the NMRI marketing video.
- Maintaining the NMRI Mentoring Program about which potential mentors and mentees

can find information on the NMRI website (<http://nmri.niddk.nih.gov/mentor/index.aspx>); 24 successful mentor/mentee pairs were established during the past 3 years.

One of the primary methods for evaluating the NMRI mission is the NMRI Questionnaire, which is available online at <http://www.scgcorp.com/NMRIQuestionnaire>. Questionnaire results from 2011 were presented at the April 2012 NMRI Workshop. The 2011 Questionnaire contained 24 questions pertaining to members' academic status, meeting attendance, reasons for attending meetings, career development, tenure process, mentor/mentee goals, and grant status. More than 40 members completed the Questionnaire during the year. Of particular interest, the career development question received responses from multiple members that indicated that the NMRI enables their interaction with administrators, increases their ability to stay abreast of current NIH policies, supports their efforts to mentor undergraduate researchers, provides guidance on best practices to yield success as a minority investigator, and supplies knowledge on the focused grant application process. Above all, NMRI members frequently have cited mentoring as the most valuable benefit of the Network. The Questionnaire also is a tool to capture member promotions (including those newly tenured), awards, publications, presentations and poster abstracts submitted to other conferences and workshops, and progress on receiving grants or other support for their research. The complete results are described on the NMRI website (<http://nmri.niddk.nih.gov/membership/questionnaire.aspx>).

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The NMRI on the Web

The NMRI has a number of member services available on its website. Several items of potential interest to both NMRI members and individuals wanting to learn more about the NMRI are:

To initiate the NMRI membership process or simply to learn more about NMRI Membership Criteria, visit http://www.scgcorp.com/nmri_membership.

Visit <http://nmri.niddk.nih.gov/workshops> to view announcements for upcoming Workshops and Meetings as well as agendas, photographs, and reports from current and/or past meetings.

The NMRI Member Questionnaire helps the Oversight Committee assess NMRI member activity within the scientific community and is available at http://www.scgcorp.com/NMRI_Questionnaire. Members are encouraged to provide regular feedback by completing the questionnaire annually. In addition, links to the results from past questionnaires are listed on this page.

Information, guidelines, and registration forms for the Mentor/Mentee Program can be accessed at <http://nmri.niddk.nih.gov/mentor/index.aspx>.

Previous NMRI Newsletters are available at: <http://nmri.niddk.nih.gov/newsletters/index.aspx>.

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NMRI members Luis Cubano (left) and Shirley Blanchard (right) complete the online NMRI Member Questionnaire at the Annual Workshop



10th Anniversary

NMRI Members: Promotions, Publications, and Accomplishments

The NMRI collects information on significant accomplishments of members, including promotions, publications, and successful grant awards. These criteria speak to the mission of the NMRI and reflect the effectiveness of the mentoring program and effort to support junior and senior investigators along their career paths. Since the NMRI was established, NMRI members have made significant progress on both fronts. Examples of reports of promotions and grants at the 10th Annual Workshop included:

Grants

Lincoln Edwards
R15 award

Mark Lawson
R01 renewal

Bridgett Rahim-Williams
K22 award from NIMHD

Marina Ramirez-Alvarado
Grant renewal

Marion Sewer
Two R01 awards and another grant

Promotions

Joyce Balls-Berry
to Assistant Professor

Rhonda Bentley-Lewis
to Assistant Professor

Lincoln Edwards
to Assistant Professor

Bob Ferry
to Chief/Program Director

Marina Ramirez-Alvarado
to Associate Professor

Charmaine Stewart
Elected Chair of the Women Faculty Cabinet

Awards and Achievements

Detrice Barry
Undergraduate Award for Public Service

Shirley Blanchard
The RFK Award at Creighton University

Healani Chang
30-year Faculty Award

Greg Florant
Distinguished Professor Award

Mark Lawson
Started a T36 mentoring program

Manu Platt
Innovator Award

Members are encouraged to send reports of their promotions, publications, and successful grant awards to Ms. Winnie Martinez, NIDDK, at martinezw@mail.nih.gov.

A circular logo with a scalloped edge, containing the text "10th Anniversary" in a stylized font. The "10th" is in a large, bold, sans-serif font, and "Anniversary" is in a smaller, cursive font below it. The logo is set against a background of blue and white wavy lines.

NMRI Frequently-Asked Questions

What are the qualifications for membership in the NMRI?

Membership in the NMRI is available only to investigators who are: (1) at the postgraduate doctoral level or higher; (2) interested in minority health research, including individuals from traditionally underserved communities: African American, Hispanic American, American Indian, Alaska Native, Native Hawaiian, and other Pacific Islanders; (3) conducting research in diabetes; endocrinology; metabolism; nutrition; or digestive, kidney, urologic, or hematologic diseases; and (4) U.S. citizens or have permanent resident status.

In addition, medical students from underrepresented minority groups are welcome to attend NMRI meetings if they are conducting research in one of the NIDDK mission areas noted above.

How can I become a member of the NMRI?

Individuals who qualify should apply for NMRI membership on the NMRI website. Go to <http://nmri.niddk.nih.gov> and click "NMRI Membership Criteria Form," located on the right side of the home page.

Whom do I contact with questions about the NMRI?

Direct questions or comments to NIDDK staff member Ms. Winnie Martinez, who oversees the NMRI. She can be reached via email at martinezw@mail.nih.gov.

Does the NMRI have a website with more information?

The NMRI maintains a website and updates it frequently (<http://nmri.niddk.nih.gov>). The website contains information about the NMRI, including meeting announcements, NIDDK funding opportunities, the NMRI Membership Directory, and summary reports on past NMRI meetings. NMRI members can access the NMRI Member Survey on the website as well.

If I am an NMRI member, how can I find a mentor?

The NMRI Mentor Program was established by the Oversight Committee, which maintains a list of NMRI members who have volunteered to serve as mentors. The biographies and research interests of NMRI members are listed in the NMRI Membership Directory (<http://nmri.niddk.nih.gov/memberships>), which is useful for identifying potential mentors.

If I am an NMRI member, how do I sign up to be a mentor?

An NMRI member who wants to volunteer as a mentor should go to the NMRI website and click the "NMRI Mentor/Mentee Program" link on the right side of the page to find instructions on becoming a mentor.

