

**BACKGROUND ON
THE NTP APPROACH FOR SYSTEMATIC REVIEW AND EVIDENCE INTEGRATION FOR
LITERATURE-BASED HEALTH ASSESSMENTS**

At the June 2012 meeting of the NTP Board of Scientific Counselors (BSC), NIEHS/NTP staff outlined plans to incorporate systematic review into NTP literature-based assessments. The presentation provided a background on systematic review methods and an update on tools for information management and data display developed by the Office of Health Assessment and Translation (OHAT), Division of NTP at the NIEHS to facilitate the systematic review process. The presentation also outlined plans to develop an approach for systematic review and evidence integration for addressing environmental health questions. Plans included: (1) review of the NTP's draft approach by a NTP Board of Scientific Counselors working group in late summer of 2012, and (2) presentation of the NTP Approach to the NTP Board of Scientific Counselors in December of 2012 or Spring 2013.

Building on guidance from authoritative sources and technical input for carrying out systematic review, the draft NTP approach lays out a structure to perform a literature search, determine whether studies are relevant for inclusion, extract data from studies, assess study quality, and synthesize data for reaching hazard identification conclusions. The method for data synthesis includes steps to assess confidence within an evidence stream (i.e., human, animal, and other relevant data such as mechanistic studies separately) and then to integrate across evidence streams to reach hazard identification conclusions.

The BSC Working Group met on August 28 and 29 in Raleigh NC to provide feedback on an initial draft of the NTP approach. The draft report of the BSC working group is attached along with the initial draft of the NTP approach (Appendix B of the report) and an outline highlighting specific aspects of the draft approach on which the working group was asked to comment (Appendix C of the report).

The NTP is considering the feedback from the BSC working group and will release a revised draft of the NTP approach before the December 11, 2012 meeting of the BSC. This revised draft NTP approach will be sent to the BSC. At the meeting, the BSC Working Group chair Dr. Lynn Goldman will present the group's draft report to the BSC for action. The BSC will be asked to vote on whether to accept the working group's report. In addition, NIEHS/NTP staff will discuss the recommendations from the BSC working group and how the NTP has addressed the BSC Working Group's input in revising the draft NTP approach. NIEHS/NTP staff will present the revised draft NTP approach to the BSC, receive input on the revised draft approach from the BSC and public, and present plans on how the NTP will implement the NTP approach in evaluations conducted by the OHAT. The NTP's goal is to finalize the NTP approach for systematic review and evidence integration following the BSC meeting.