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FRIENDS OF THE CONGRESSIONAL HEARING HEALTH CAUCUS
TOUR NIDCD RESEARCH LABS

WASHINGTON, DC, August 26, 2015 — The Friends of the Congressional Hearing Health Caucus (FCHHC) hosted a tour of the National Institute on Deafness and Other Communication Disorders (NIDCD) labs in Bethesda, MD, on August 20. The visit was attended by 25 Congressional staffers and hearing health advocates.

Dr. James Battey Jr., NIDCD Director, and Dr. Andrew Griffith, NIDCD Scientific Director, reviewed the Institute's scientific advancements and cutting-edge research programs, and attendees also had the opportunity to tour two NIDCD labs. Dr. Katie Kindt, Acting Chief of NIDCD’s Section on Sensory Cell Development, talked about her research using zebrafish to study hearing loss and balance disorders. She described that zebrafish have sensory “hair cells” located on the length of their body and how these hair cells are similar to the hair cells that are responsible for hearing and balance in the human inner ear. Dr. Wade Chien, Otolaryngology Surgeon-Scientist, Neurotology Program, discussed his research using gene therapy to restore the inner ear hair cells in a deaf mouse. It is hopeful this therapy may one day be used to treat humans with hearing loss or balance disorders.

The visit was organized by Hearing Industries Association (HIA) which handles administrative requirements for FCHHC which hosts events in support of the Congressional Hearing Health Caucus (CHHC). The CHHC is Co-chaired by Rep. David McKinley (R-WV) and Rep. Mike Thompson (D-CA). The next FCHHC event will be a Hearing Screening Reception in the Rayburn House Office Building in Washington, DC on October 21.

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