

**Environmental influences on Child Health Outcomes (ECHO)  
External Scientific Board**

**Charter**

**Charge and Mission**

The ECHO External Scientific Board (ESB) will provide advice on strategies to ensure the long-term success of the ECHO program. Challenges to the ECHO Program include fostering a culture of collaboration; attending to numerous stakeholders, such as Congress, researchers, professional societies and participants; harmonizing data across disparate cohorts; capitalizing on expertise within as well as outside NIH; incorporating all ECHO components under one umbrella; reinforcing solid ethical principles throughout, promoting timely public sharing of important discoveries, ensuring early, sustained successes; and using funds wisely.

**Roles and Responsibilities**

The role of the ESB is to consider how to overcome challenges to the ECHO program and to provide feedback to the NIH ECHO Program office, in addition to providing findings to the Council of Councils for further consideration.

Other duties include:

- Offering input on the ECHO structure, function, and study design, both during protocol development and during the analysis of results
- Providing findings to ensure that resources that the program delivers are as useful as possible for end users
- Safeguarding the interests of study participants
- Assessing the safety and validity of study procedures
- Assessing data security policies and procedures
- Addressing ethical questions raised in the ECHO program
  - With the approval of the NIH, ESB members can call on ad hoc members when additional expertise is needed

The ESB will provide findings to the Council of Councils who will in-turn provide recommendations to the NIH Director.

**Composition and Governance**

Ten to fifteen external experts, selected and appointed by the NIH ECHO Program Director and NIH Director, will serve as the External Scientific Board (ESB). Members include non-federal employees with scientific and biomedical expertise in pediatrics, early childhood development, public health, environmental toxins, epidemiology, and community-based participatory research, as well as human subjects research and research with American Indian and Alaskan Native peoples.

Members will serve a term of five years with the option to renew.

The chairperson will be selected by the NIH ECHO Program Director.

Executive Secretary functions will be performed by a member of the NIH ECHO Program Office, which is in the Office of the Director.

### **Meetings**

The ESB will hold regular meetings bi-annually or more frequently if needed. ESB may also address matters between meetings via electronic and written communications. NIH ECHO Program staff will be responsible for (1) working with the chairperson to develop agendas for the meetings, (2) distributing meeting materials (such as reports on ECHO progress) to the ESB in a timely manner, and (3) facilitating the preparation of meeting summaries for approval by the chairperson and distribution to the members.

### **Sunset Provisions**

The ECHO Program Director and staff will review the ESB charter every three years. Any major amendments to the charter or termination of the ESB will require the approval of the ECHO Director.