

A Speakers Bureau for the Clinical Research Industry

By Norman M. Goldfarb

Medical science cannot progress without clinical research. Alarmist, one-sided books, television shows, and news articles discourage public participation in clinical studies and promote excessive regulation.

As the founder and chairman of the California Industrial Biotechnology Association, I led a successful industry effort in the 1980s to generate favorable public opinion and create a constructive regulatory environment in the state. The Industrial Biotechnology Association (IBA), one of the two parents of today's Biotechnology Industry Organization (BIO), successfully translated our efforts to the national level. Subsequently, the industry lost its public goodwill and policy momentum in Europe. One unfortunate result is that thousands of people have starved to death because their governments would not accept free genetically-modified food aid during natural disasters.

Our industry is well-represented in Washington D.C. by industry associations such as PhRMA, DIA and ACRP. The Center for Information and Study on Clinical Research Participation (CISCRP) conducts an effective public outreach program, principally through the media. Good investigative sites generate positive word-of-mouth through happy study subjects, but only a small percentage of Americans participate in clinical research, and not all of them have positive experiences.

What the clinical research- and biotechnology- industries lack today is a nationwide capability to tell our story face-to-face at the thousands of schools, community centers, churches and other places where people gather to learn more about the world around them. If we don't put a face on our industry for the public, others will do it for us.

We have therefore launched the First Clinical Research Speakers Bureau as a focal point for people in the industry who want to tell our story, and people in our communities who want to hear it.

Slides and hand-outs are available on our website. We also encourage conference organizers to use our speakers bureau as a free resource.

To volunteer or learn more, visit our website at <http://www.firstclinical.com/bureau>.

We have a great story; all we have to do is get out there and tell it.

Norman M. Goldfarb is Managing Partner of First Clinical Research, a provider of a clinical research best practices consulting, training, implementation and research services. Contact him at (650) 465-0119 or ngoldfarb@firstclinical.com.