

MIKE SIMPSON

SECOND DISTRICT, IDAHO

WASHINGTON OFFICE:

1339 LONGWORTH HOUSE OFFICE BUILDING
WASHINGTON, DC 20515
(202) 225-5531
FAX: (202) 225-8216

DISTRICT OFFICE:

802 WEST BANNOCK STREET, SUITE 600
BOISE, ID 83702
(208) 334-1953
FAX: (208) 334-9533
www.house.gov/simpson



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A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Mike Simpson".

TRIBUTE TO National Institutes of Health

SPEECH OF
Hon. Michael K. Simpson
OF IDAHO
IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES
April 30, 2008

Madam Speaker, I rise today to pay tribute to the National Institutes of Health (NIH) and the important research it is doing. There are few investments the federal government makes that regularly pay dividends to the American taxpayer. The National Institutes of Health, the lead government agency tasked with preventing and curing diseases and disorders, is one such investment. NIH conducts biomedical research at its Maryland campus and also supports biomedical research at medical centers, independent research laboratories and colleges and universities across our country. I would like to highlight one example of research that NIH is supporting to improve our constituents' overall health and well-being through the Eunice Kennedy Shriver National Institute of Child Health and Human Development (NICHD).

Premature birth is a major public health priority for the United States and a major research priority for the NICHD. In 2003, one out of every eight infants was born premature--resulting in more than \$18 billion in hospital expenditures. Premature infants are at high risk for a variety of disorders, including mental retardation, cerebral palsy, and vision impairment.

The primary goal of premature research is to find a way to prevent births from occurring before an infant is strong enough to survive outside of the womb. Because women who have one premature birth are considered to be at high risk for another premature birth, NICHD investigators have focused their attention on trying to prevent premature birth among these high-risk women. Researchers in an NICHD funded Maternal-Fetal Medicine Network set out to test the use of a specific type of progesterone called 17P that the body makes to support pregnancy. The results were remarkable--for women who have a history of premature delivery that are carrying one baby, injections of 17P reduced premature birth by one-third. The results of this research are currently being translated into real world results as obstetricians across the country are putting them into practice with their patients. This research is a clear and important step towards achieving our goal of bringing healthy babies into the world.

This is just one example of how the research funded with taxpayer dollars at the NIH is improving the health and well-being of all Americans.