

Appendix E

RIO Recruitment Letter

Dear RIO's Name,

The DHHS Office of Research Integrity (ORI) has contracted with RTI International, a not-for-profit research organization in North Carolina, to conduct a telephone interview study. We want to talk with the persons responsible for implementing the plan for addressing allegations of research misconduct, specifically fabrication, falsification, and plagiarism, in institutions performing research. Persons with this responsibility are often referred to as Research Integrity Officers or RIOs.

The goal of the study is to learn from RIOs about the type of information “whistleblowers”, or complainants, seek and receive from RIOs at various stages of the allegation resolution process. The stages include when they initiate the process by deciding to make an allegation, while they are in the midst of the resolution process, and following completion of the process. The information collected will be used by ORI to gain a fuller understanding of the questions and concerns expressed by “whistleblowers” at various stages of the allegation process. Moreover, the information obtained through the interviews will be used to develop educational materials and training opportunities for RIOs so they are better able to attend to the information needs of “whistleblowers”.

Prior to conducting this study with up to 100 RIOs, we conducted a small pretest with a random sample of RIOs to obtain feedback on aspects of the data collection instrument such as its length and the wording of questions. The feedback we received was used to make modifications to the interview. The study interview should take approximately 45 minutes to complete.

We have contacted you because you were identified to ORI either as the RIO by your institution or because you submitted your institution's annual report on misconduct. We would like to schedule an interview with your institution's RIO. If you are the RIO, there is no need to do anything further. We will contact you in a few days to set up a convenient time in the next eight weeks to do the interview. If you want to schedule your interview time immediately, you may do so by “clicking” on the link below. It will take you to a secure site where you can use our auto scheduler. However, if you are not the RIO, we would greatly appreciate a reply to this e-mail as soon as possible identifying the RIO and including an e-mail address so we can contact your institution's RIO about participation in this study. The interviews will be confidential and present results in a way that will not identify RIOs or their institutions.

If you have any questions about the interview, you may e-mail or call me, Dr. Arthur J. Bonito, the RTI Project Director at (ajb@rti.org or 919-541-6377), or the ORI Project Officer, Dr. Sandra Titus at (sandra.titus@dhhs.gov or 301-443-5300). If you have any questions about your rights as a study participant, you may call RTI's Office of Research Protection at 1-866-214-2043 (a toll-free number).

Thank you for your cooperation.

Sincerely,

Arthur J. Bonito, Ph.D.
Project Director

