

## Attachment 1: Invitation Letter to NCI Resource Directors

NCI Leadership Letter to the Specimen Resource Directors (from Dr Varmus) 5/30/13

Dear Division and Center Directors:

The purpose of this letter is to inform you of an important, new initiative to catalogue NCI's specimen resources. As you recall, the Scientific Program Leaders reviewed the NCI's specimen resources last year and agreed that a more consistent, harmonized process for understanding our investment was required. Towards this end, I request your active intervention to make this new initiative a success.

We are developing an expanded, searchable website called Specimen Resource Locator (SRL). The SRL helps make researchers aware of existing NCI resources, and facilitates the use of biospecimens. The availability of specimen resources is critical to increase our fundamental understanding of the biology of cancer and to translate important research discoveries to clinical application. However, unless researchers can learn about resources available to them, the value of our various repositories will not be fully realized.

The SRL will list all NCI-supported specimen repositories, and will also list a link to those repositories. It does not recreate a separate resource database, nor does it control the inventory of specimens. It simply allows researchers to locate specimens that may be needed for research, and NCI leaders to have a comprehensive understanding of our overall investment in specimen banks. Please have your staff who lead these specimen resources participate by listing your specimen resources with the SRL. They should include the specimen collections in all your resources but you can specify those you would like to advertise and distribute, and you may indicate if there are any collaboration requirements. There is a short, online information collection form that they will need to complete. This form will facilitate the entry of specimen resource information while creating a comprehensive database for the SRL.

We believe the SRL will help you operate your resources more efficiently by allowing researchers to search the database and retrieve a list of resources likely to meet their needs. The SRL will reduce inappropriate requests and lead appropriate cancer research investigators directly to your resource.

If no match of specimen to investigator is available, the SRL refers researchers to the Tissue Expediter. The Tissue Expediter is distinct from the SRL in that it is an individual who helps the investigator locate appropriate resources. Also, the Tissue Expediter helps identify potential collaborations between researchers and those specimen resources that are not easily accessible to the research community.

Please provide contact information for the person responsible for your specimen resources and address any questions to Dr. Irina Lubensky at [lubenskyi@mail.nih.gov](mailto:lubenskyi@mail.nih.gov).