



Brita Water *Research Institute*

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For Immediate Release

BRITA WATER RESEARCH INSTITUTE LAUNCHED IN CHICAGO TO FUND RESEARCH AND EDUCATION ON WATER AND HEALTH

Collaboration with the American Diabetes Association to Study the Effects of Drinking Water on Decreasing Obesity in Children Among First Planned Projects

April 19, 2005 (Chicago, IL) – With a mission of improving public health and well being by expanding knowledge about quality drinking water, the national **Brita Water Research Institute** (BWRI) and its www.BWRI.org website were officially launched today. The announcement was made at a breakfast program led by Jennie Ward Robinson, Ph.D., Executive Director, BWRI, and Gregory S. Frank, General Manager, Brita Products Company, which provided an unrestricted research and educational grant to support the Institute's goals.

Also attending were Dr. Pierre Payment, Chairman of the BWRI Health and Scientific Advisory Board and a professor at the University of Quebec's National Institute of Scientific Research, and Dr. Paul Hunter, Chairman of the BWRI Executive Board of Directors and Professor of Health Protection at the School of Medicine, Health Policy and Practice, University of East Anglia (Norwich, England).

"Understanding the relationship between drinking water and good health is vital to public health, and access to *high quality* drinking water is a cornerstone of *improving* public health," noted Dr. Ward Robinson. "BWRI is committed to advancing research on the relationships between drinking water and specific health outcomes."

The Brita Water Research Institute, an independent, not-for-profit science and education organization, has three primary goals: (1) identify and promote opportunities to construct a national research agenda on water and health related research; (2) directly fund research to expand knowledge of water and health; and (3) produce information for both the scientific community and for consumers on water consumption and its health impact. To these ends, BWRI will provide scientific direction, developmental funding and technical support to scientists and educators to support research and scientific publications, and will convene meetings and workshops on important issues and findings in water and health research.

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Among the Institute's activities planned for the first year are:

Partnerships: BWRI has established its first major partnership, with the American Diabetes Association (ADA). The partnership will support a study of the role of drinking water in the development of obesity in children and in reducing the onset of diabetes in children. Additionally, BWRI has been invited to join the Roundtable on Environmental Health Sciences, Research and Medicine of the Institute of Medicine, National Academy of Sciences. The Roundtable includes members from academia, business and the federal government and provides a forum for consideration of major sensitive environmental research issues. Dr. Ward Robinson will also serve as a liaison member of the Water Science & Technology Board of the National Research Council.

Grants and Funding: In the summer of 2005, BWRI will announce its first research grants competition at www.bwri.org. BWRI will establish a portfolio of research grants on important questions in drinking water and health outcomes. The BWRI research program will: emphasize novel research questions that are likely to result in significant public health and scientific impact and that are not already funded by traditional grant funding organizations; encourage trans-disciplinary research teams; and support pilot projects that are designed to lead to full scale research projects.

Conferences and Workshops: The BWRI convened a scientific workshop, "Current Critical Questions in Research on Drinking Water and Health," to establish a research agenda for fiscal year 2005 grant funding. A major goal of BWRI is to clarify and advance the national research agenda in drinking water and health outcomes. Therefore, BWRI will continue to develop and convene meetings on key topic areas to examine the state of science. In October 2005, BWRI will host a consensus conference in Chicago on "Boil Water Advisories: What the Public Needs to Know." Additional information will be available at: www.BWRI.org.

Publications: In the fall 2005, the International Journal of Water and Health will publish the papers proceeding from the BWRI workshop, "Current Critical Questions in Research on Drinking Water and Health." More information will be available at: www.BWRI.org.

In addition to these activities, BWRI has created the comprehensive www.BWRI.org website to reach not only the scientific community but also the general public, including parents and educators. In particular, its "BWRI Resource Center" aims to serve as an accessible information hub for water and health activities.

The Brita Water Research Institute is located in west suburban Naperville, Illinois. For more information, please visit www.BWRI.org.

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Editor's Note: A complete press kit, including photos, FAQs, and a public service announcement video clip, is now available on-line at www.BWRI.org.