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April 2007 Spotlight on the SRCD Policy Fellow: Carmela Lomonaco, Ph.D.

2006-2007 Federal Executive Branch Policy Fellow

Carmela Lomonaco, Ph.D.

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As I near the end of my fellowship at NICHD, I am excited for how it has given me a deeper understanding of the potential for better integration of research and practice into policy and on a personal note, has shown me opportunities for my own career path. Over the last two years, I have been involved in almost every aspect of how science policy and program development are actualized within an NIH institute.

My goals for this fellowship were to see how research, policy and the public interact to create initiatives for a federal agency. As such I have rotated into many offices and divisions within NICHD. I focused on the three aspects (Review, Program and Grants Management) of the extramural program. I have worked in Scientific Review learning how science is deemed worthy for federal funding. I have also worked with various branches within the institute on program and initiative development; grant administration and support. I have had the opportunity to learn how a subject area portfolio is evaluated for depth and breadth which will determine priority areas for funding. I currently am working in Grants Management to understand how grants are

prepared to funds disbursement; how grants managements interfaces with grantee institutions and program officials within NICHD.

I have spent some time understanding how the intramural program operates and sets its priorities, especially in relationship to the extramural program. I have worked with the Office of Special Populations, as well as the Prevention Research and International Programs office, to develop processes to assist both appropriate, I use the orientation and methodology from my own discipline of Sociology to offer an explanations or ways to look at policy, program development and their evaluation. These inroads have been the greatest personal accomplishment for me. We may not change the world with these fellowships but I think each one of us have minor victories on behalf of children and each one of us can point to one small way we offered research into the policy for children and their families – at least I know I can.