

inquisitors," predicts Lisa Raines, vice president for government relations at Genzyme Inc. To ensure compliance with the new guidelines, the PTO plans to supplement its staff of 165 biotech examiners—about half of whom have Ph.D.s—with at least two people who will review all actions taken on biotech patents.

Biotech officials insist that the new guidelines will not jeopardize public health because the FDA will still require clinical data before approving a new drug or device. "It's not the job of the patent office to serve as a supermedical agency to decide whether or not a drug works," says Beier. The guidelines—for which the patent office is accept-

ing comment until 24 February—"will assure the division of responsibility between the patent office and the FDA," he says. FDA officials agree. "As far as we can tell, the patent office's decision will not impact our operations or procedures," says an FDA spokesperson.

—Richard Stone

NATIONAL INSTITUTES OF HEALTH

Broder to Join Exodus From NCI

Samuel Broder, director of the National Cancer Institute (NCI), surprised top officials at the National Institutes of Health (NIH) last month when he disclosed that he will leave the government in April to join a private company. After 22 years at NIH, six as NCI director, Broder told *Science* he has been in government long enough and looks forward to the "enormous freedom" scientists in the private sector enjoy. Broder will become vice president and chief scientific officer of the IVAX Corp. of Miami, a producer of generic drugs and cancer therapeutics, which is developing a synthetic form of the anti-cancer agent taxol. Broder is credited with strengthening clinical research at a time when NCI's total budget was under pressure.

Broder's decision to quit is the latest in a string of resignations and retirements that leaves NCI "hollowed out," as one senior staffer puts it. With a budget of \$2 billion and more than 2000 employees, NCI is the largest unit of NIH. The change of leadership comes at a difficult time for NCI, as the institute recovers from criticism of alleged lax oversight of clinical trials and struggles to cope with austerity measures affecting all government agencies.

The institute has been without a deputy director since early 1994, when Daniel Ihde, the former deputy, left to join the faculty of Washington University in St. Louis. He was followed in August by Richard Adamson, former director of the division of cancer etiology, who left NCI to head the Washington office of the National Soft Drinks Association. And Bruce Chabner, director of the division of cancer therapy, announced recently that he will leave in April to direct cancer therapy at the Massachusetts General Hospital in Boston. Others who have left NCI since 1993 without being replaced include Peter Howley, chief of the laboratory of tumor virus biology, who moved to Harvard Medical School; Stuart Aaronson, chief of the Laboratory of Cellular and Molecular Biology, to the Mount Sinai Medical Center in New York City; and Takis Papas, chief of the Laboratory of Molecular Oncology, to the Medical University of South Carolina in Charleston.

Still more will leave this year: Michael Sporn, chief of the Laboratory of Chemoprevention, plans to retire in April to join Dartmouth Medical School, and Robert Gallo, chief of the Laboratory of Tumor Cell Biology, says he is considering several outside offers and will accept one of them soon.

This exodus, according to some observers, has been prompted in part by the growth of attractive nongovernment jobs in cancer research. Biomedical centers have begun to recognize the scientific and economic value of having a powerful oncology department, says one top NCI official, who points out that a recent study done for Johns Hopkins University shows that the average cancer patient runs up a hospital bill two to three times that of the average noncancer patient. This is an



Under the microscope. Broder says distrust of public officials is making government service hard to take.

important business consideration for university hospitals, which have hired away some of NCI's top researchers with lucrative job offers. Broder, who was recruited to his new job by IVAX chair Phillip Frost, member of an NCI advisory board, will reportedly at least double his current \$120,000 government salary.

But the environment at NCI may also be partly to blame. Broder, who notes that he served as the "lightning rod" for critics of the federal war on cancer, has harsh things to say about public and congressional distrust of public officials. "You would not believe the number of restrictions that have been placed

on high-level employees," such as limits on honoraria or rules against involvement in nongovernment projects. "Life has gotten a lot harder for government service," Broder says. At the same time, the job of managing NCI is getting tougher. Broder points out that, in constant dollars, the institute's budget for cancer-related activities has not increased since the early 1980s, while other parts of NIH have grown. And he adds, "I don't particularly look forward to the level of extreme budget austerity that is coming down the line."

An even harsher assessment comes from former NCI staffer Adamson, who says the institute has been harried by political lobbies, stressed by a shortage of resources, and subjected to "micromanagement" from Congress and the Administration. And he contends that Varmus has attempted to interfere "for political reasons" in the NCI director's choice of appointees, emphasizing ethnic and gender diversity, all of which has led to a loss of morale.

Both Broder and Varmus contest this bleak interpretation. "All biological systems go through a cycle of renewal," and that's what NCI is doing now, says Broder. "There was an influx of very strong people in the late 1960s and 1970s, and their term of government service is now coming to an end." Broder also brushes aside reports that he and the NIH director have clashed, saying his resignation has nothing to do with "rumored personality differences" between himself and Varmus. Varmus agrees, saying that "any suggestion that [Broder] and I are not on good terms is ridiculous. ... We've gotten along very well; he's got a good sense of humor, and he's given me a lot of good advice." That good relationship was not evident, however, in Broder's leave-taking: Because Varmus missed a phone call from Broder, he learned of his plans the day Broder announced them at a staff meeting.

Given the difficulties any new NCI director will face, it could be hard to recruit a new chief. But Varmus is optimistic. The NCI director is appointed by the president, and Varmus expects the Administration will get a search under way quickly and have a candidate ready for consideration by April.

—Eliot Marshall