



JUN - 7 2012

Assistant Secretary for
Preparedness & Response
Washington, D.C. 20201

John S. Parker, MD, Major General (Retired)
Chair, National Biodefense Science Board
Senior Vice President
Scientific Applications International Corporation
656 Lynn Shores Drive
Virginia Beach, VA 23452

Dear Dr. Parker and Members of the National Biodefense Science Board (NBSB):

The Department of Health and Human Services has begun activities to develop a Public Health and Healthcare Situational Awareness (SA) Strategy and Implementation Plan (SIP). The Public Health and Healthcare SA SIP aims to strengthen our overall national health security by serving as a comprehensive and national strategy and implementation plan, as called for in the current legislation to reauthorize the Pandemic and All Hazards Preparedness Act (PAHPA). The Public Health and Healthcare SA SIP will provide a common approach to building SA capabilities, to ensure the early detection of incidents with potential adverse health impacts, as well as effective decision making and resource allocation during a response.

I would like the NBSB to review and evaluate the Public Health and Healthcare SA SIP during its development to offer guidance, including recommendations, on the measurable steps to take to enhance our current public health and healthcare situational awareness capabilities. Biosurveillance is one of the major components of situational awareness, therefore, I would also like the NBSB to assess current biosurveillance activities, identify efficiencies, and make recommendations, in coordination with the applicable existing Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) advisory committees. The Office of the Assistant Secretary for Preparedness and Response (ASPR) and the CDC will lead the SA SIP development process.

Given the NBSB's demonstrated ability, experience, and expertise, your contributions towards the development of this strategy and implementation plan are yet another critical step taken towards ensuring the public health and healthcare preparedness of our nation.

In performing your deliberations, however, I encourage the NBSB to obtain stakeholder views on this topic using whatever means is deemed most appropriate. I look forward to discussing your initial thoughts on this topic at the June 26, 2012, NBSB public meeting. The timeline for completion will be consistent with the timeline established in the final reauthorization of the PAHPA.

Thank you for your continued diligence in serving to strengthen our nation's resilience.

Sincerely,

/s/ Nicole Lurie

Nicole Lurie, MD, MSPH
Assistant Secretary for Preparedness and Response