DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH & HUMAN SERVICES

Office of the Secretary

Office of the Assistant Secretary for Preparedness & Response

National Biodefense Science Board
Washington, D.C. 20201

March 26, 2008

The Honorable Michael O. Leavitt
Secretary of Health and Human Services
200 Independence Avenue, S.W.
Washington,, D.C. 20201

Dear Secretary Leavitt:

The Disaster Medicine Working Group (DM-WG) of the National Biodefense Science Board (NBSB) was asked to review and comment on the draft charter for the Federal Education and Training Interagency Group (FETIG).

The DM-WG would like to thank the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services (HHS) for actively soliciting input from the NBSB and the DM-WG. The early engagement of the NBSB is a clear sign that HHS is interested in engaging stakeholders in the development of public health and medical disaster preparedness and response core curricula, training, and education.

In general, the Charter is a reasonable initial step in the process of the U.S government's efforts in the development of public health and medical disaster preparedness and response core curricula, training, and education. We share HHS's sense of urgency related to this initiative and encourage other departments to expeditiously sign the Charter.

In our review of the draft Charter three general areas raised concerns for the DM-WG. Our recommendations are listed below.

1. The DM-WG believes the current charge of the FETIG, with its broad focus on Public Health and Medical Disaster Preparedness and Response is overly broad.

   The DM-WG recommends the FETIG charter be focused on Disaster Medicine, and aspects of Public Health that are related to Disaster Preparedness.

2. The DM-WG recognizes that the draft FETIG charter includes a statement regarding soliciting external advice, consultation, and recommendations; however, the Working Group believes, as drafted the FETIG charter does not clearly commit engagement of non-federal stakeholders.

   The DM-WG recommends the FETIG charter clearly define the role and mechanism for non-federal stakeholder engagement in the development of the core curriculum.

3. The DM-WG is concerned the FETIG charter as drafted, implies that the Joint Program in disaster medicine and public health is going to be responsible for carrying out the activities of the FETIG. The draft charter, by listing the establishment of the Joint Program over emphasizes its role in these activities.

   The DM-WG recommends the FETIG Charter be revised to clarify the responsibilities of the FETIG and the role of the Joint Program.

Patricia Quinlisk MD 4/1/08

Patricia Quinlisk, M.D., M.P.H. Date
NBSB, Chair

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May 27, 2008

The Honorable Michael O. Leavitt
Secretary of Health and Human Services
200 Independence Avenue, S.W.
Washington, DC 20201

Dear Secretary Leavitt:

I want to clarify the nature of recommendations I submitted to you previously on April 1, 2008, on the draft charter for the Federal Education and Training Interagency Group (FETIG).

The recommendations that I submitted to you were deliberated and discussed on March 26, 2008 in a public meeting of the Board. Following discussion of the members and a public comment period, the Board adopted the recommendations of the Disaster Medicine Working Group of the National Biodefense Science Board (NBSB) on the draft charter for the FETIG. Therefore, the recommendations we submitted to you were the recommendations of the NBSB, not the Disaster Medicine Working Group.

I apologize for any confusion created when I forwarded the recommendations without clarifying the process we used to discuss publicly and decide on the information presented to the Board.

Sincerely,

Patricia Quinlisk MD

Patricia Quinlisk, M.D., M.P.H.
Chair, National Biodefense Science Board