

PUBLIC INTEREST PARTNERS
OF THE
NATIONAL INSTITUTE OF ENVIRONMENTAL HEALTH SCIENCES

May 15, 2007

Dr. Kristina Thayer
NIEHS
P. O. Box 12233
Research Triangle Park, NC 27709

Dear Dr. Thayer:

The members of the Public Interest Partners, an advisory committee of the National Institute of Environmental Health Sciences, want to thank you for the opportunity to comment on the very encompassing review of the Centers for Children's Environmental Health and Disease Prevention. We have the following comments and questions on several parts of the report.

1. Areas of Research. On Page 12 the Report states: "Research should cover a wide range of topics in children's environmental health." This premise is very important and therefore the areas should be chosen proactively, not reactively. It appears that very often the areas for research are chosen based on recent law suits or other negative findings.
2. Community-based Participatory Research (CBPR). Community-based participatory research and education components appear to be elective in the report, rather than mandatory. This is very confusing. Especially since "successful community outreach" is listed as a strength in the Executive Summary Table (page iv). If the language were clearer, the confusion would be eliminated. The community component, the people that our members come in contact with every day, are more than subjects and deserve actual involvement and education around the research being conducted.

Very often community liaisons can broker the need for subjects; however, to do this requires the cooperation of the grantees and money to develop and carry out the program. If the principal investigator does not have the time or feel

comfortable to develop and lead a community out reach program, the grant should include funds for this very vital area.

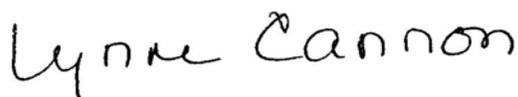
3. Clarification of Intent. Stronger language would clarify the intent to raise the bar for core-based science (i.e., bio-monitoring). In addition, community-based input should be balanced with that of the Institute. On page 12, the Goals table and the subsequent narrative defines knowledge translation as a program goal. We are not clear how that is accomplished most effectively without the continuous practice of CBPR and outreach/education work.

5. Grant Recipients. How does the public (i.e., public interest groups such as ours) know who were awarded RO1 Grants and who received Center Grants?

Multidisciplinary and Transdisciplinary Research, the basis of the Children's Centers, has over the years provided important scientific information. We hope that the Centers programs will continue to provide much needed information by communities across our country.

Sincerely,

Nse Obot Witherspoon
Committee Chairperson
nobot@cehn.org



Lynne Cannon
Committee Member
lynne-cannon@uiowa.edu