



UNITED STATES ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION AGENCY
WASHINGTON, D.C. 20460

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OFFICE OF
RESEARCH AND DEVELOPMENT

J. Routt Reigart, MD
Chair, Children's Health Protection Advisory Committee
Medical University of South Carolina
165 Cannon St. - Suite 505
P.O. Box 250853
Charleston, SC 29425

Dear Dr. Reigart:

Thank you for your letter to Administrator Browner of May 28, 1999, in which you encouraged the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) to conduct a longitudinal birth cohort study. EPA, as a member of the President's Task Force on Children's Environmental Health Risks and Safety Risks, is actively exploring the feasibility of an interagency Children's Longitudinal Cohort Study.

An interagency subgroup of the Task Force's Developmental Disorders Working Group is discussing a long-range plan, including estimated costs and phasing of the funding that would be needed. The study would involve identifying a large cohort of children at a number of locations throughout the country and collecting exposure and health effects data beginning during their early intrauterine life and continuing into childhood and possibly beyond. The interagency Working Group is discussing the concept of a core study in which all interested agencies would participate, supplemented by special studies supporting the missions of the agencies. EPA's interests include environmental exposures at critical times in development, behavior patterns in children at different ages, dietary (food and water) intake and nutrition at different ages, health outcomes that can be linked to exposures, and other exposure and socioeconomic factors that may impact health and well-being.

We appreciate the offer of the Children's Health Protection Advisory Committee to contribute to future thinking on the feasibility, scoping, and design of a longitudinal study of children's health. As the discussions of the Interagency Working Group proceed, we will keep the CHPAC informed of progress and foresee many opportunities for consultation on the planning of the study.

Sincerely,

Norine E. Noonan, Ph.D.
Assistant Administrator

*We look forward to
consultation and
advice from CHPAC.*