

shall state the nominee is aware of the nomination, is willing to serve as a member, and appears to have no conflict of interest that would preclude membership. FDA will ask the potential candidates to provide detailed information concerning such matters as financial holdings, employment, and research grants and/or contracts to permit evaluation of possible sources of conflict of interest. The nomination should state whether the nominee is interested only in a particular advisory committee or in any advisory committee. The term of office is up to 4 years, depending on the appointment date.

This notice is issued under the Federal Advisory Committee Act (5 U.S.C. app. 2) and 21 CFR part 14 relating to advisory committees.

Dated: June 30, 1997.

Michael A. Friedman,

Deputy Commissioner for Operations.

[FR Doc. 97-17795 Filed 7-8-97; 8:45 am]

BILLING CODE 4160-01-P

DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH AND HUMAN SERVICES

Food and Drug Administration

Clinical Studies of Safety and Effectiveness of Orphan Products; Availability of Grants; Request for Applications

AGENCY: Food and Drug Administration, HHS.

ACTION: Notice.

SUMMARY: The Food and Drug Administration (FDA) is announcing the following changes to its Orphan Products Development (OPD) grant program for fiscal year (FY) 1998. The previous announcement of this program, which was published in the **Federal Register** of June 6, 1996, is superseded by this announcement. In the future, a new announcement will be published annually.

DATES: Application receipt dates are: October 15, 1997, and March 15, 1998. If the receipt date falls on a weekend, it will be extended to Monday; if the date falls on a holiday, it will be extended to the following workday.

ADDRESSES: Application forms are available from, and completed applications should be submitted to: Robert L. Robins, Grants Management Officer, Division of Contracts and Procurement Management (HFA-520), Food and Drug Administration, 5600 Fishers Lane, Park Bldg., rm. 3-40, Rockville, MD 20857, 301-443-6170.

(Applications hand-carried or commercially delivered should be addressed to the Park Bldg., 12420 Parklawn Dr., rm. 3-40, Rockville, MD 20852.)

FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT:

Regarding the administrative and financial management aspects of this notice: Robert L. Robins (address above).

Regarding the programmatic aspects of this notice: Ronda A. Balham, Office of Orphan Products Development (HF-35), Food and Drug Administration, 5600 Fishers Lane, rm. 8-73, Rockville, MD 20857, 301-827-3666.

SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION: FDA is announcing the anticipated availability of funds for FY 1998 for awarding grants to support clinical trials on the safety and effectiveness of products for a rare disease or condition (i.e., one with a prevalence, not incidence, of fewer than 200,000 people in the United States). Contingent on availability of FY 1998 funds, it is anticipated that \$11.3 million will be available, of which 3.5 million will be for noncompeting continuation awards. This will leave \$7.8 million for funding approximately 30 new applications. Any phase clinical trial is eligible for up to \$100,000 in direct costs per annum plus applicable indirect costs for up to 3 years. Phase 2 and 3 clinical trials are eligible for up to \$200,000 in direct costs per annum plus applicable indirect costs for up to 3 years.

FDA will support the clinical studies covered by this notice under section 301 of the Public Health Service Act (the PHS act) (42 U.S.C. 241). FDA's research program is described in the Catalog of Federal Domestic Assistance, No. 93.103.

The Public Health Service (PHS) strongly encourages all grant recipients to provide a smoke-free work place and to discourage the use of all tobacco products. This is consistent with the PHS mission to protect and advance the physical and mental health of the American people.

PHS urges applicants to submit work plans that address specific objectives of "Healthy People 2000." Potential applicants may obtain a copy of "Healthy People 2000" (Full Report, stock No. 017-001-00474-0) through the Superintendent of Documents, Government Printing Office, Washington, DC 20402-9325, 202-512-1800.

PHS policy is that applicants for PHS clinical research grants are required to include minorities and women in study populations so that research findings

can be of benefit to all persons at risk of the disease, disorder, or condition under study; special emphasis must be placed on the need for inclusion of minorities and women in studies of diseases, disorders, and conditions which disproportionately affect them. This policy is intended to apply to males and females of all ages. If women or minorities are excluded or inadequately represented in clinical research, particularly in proposed population-based studies, a clear compelling rationale must be provided.

I. Program Research Goals

OPD was established to identify and facilitate the availability of orphan products. In the OPD grant program, orphan products are defined as drugs, biologics, medical devices, and foods for medical purposes which are indicated for a rare disease or condition (i.e., one with a prevalence, not incidence, of fewer than 200,000 people in the United States). Diagnostic tests and vaccines will qualify only if the U.S. population of intended use is lower than 200,000 per annum.

One way to make orphan products available is to support clinical research to determine whether the products are safe and effective. All funded studies are subject to the requirements of the Federal Food, Drug, and Cosmetic Act (the act) and regulations issued thereunder. The grants are funded under the legislative authority of section 301 of the PHS Act (42 U.S.C 241).

The goal of FDA's OPD grant program is the clinical development of products for use in rare diseases or conditions where no current therapy exists or where current therapy would be improved. FDA provides grants to conduct clinical studies intended to provide data acceptable to the agency which will either result in or substantially contribute to approval of these products. Applicants should keep this goal in mind and must include an explanation in the "Background and Significance" section of the application of how their proposed study will either facilitate product approval or provide essential data needed for product development. Information regarding meetings and/or discussions with FDA reviewing division staff about the product to be studied should also be provided as an appendix to the application. This information is extremely important for the review process.

Except for medical foods that do not require premarket approval, FDA will only consider awarding grants to support clinical studies for determining whether the products are safe and

effective for premarket approval under the act (21 U.S.C. 301 *et seq.*) or under section 351 of the PHS Act (42 U.S.C. 262). All studies of new drug and biological products must be conducted under the FDA's investigational new drug (IND) procedures and studies of medical devices must be conducted under the investigational device exemption (IDE) procedures. Studies of approved products to evaluate new orphan indications are also acceptable; however, these are also required to be conducted under an IND or IDE to support a change in official labeling. (See section V.B of this document "Program Review Criteria" for critical requirements concerning IND/IDE status of products to be studied under these grants.)

Studies submitted for the larger grants (\$200,000) must be continuing in phase 2 or phase 3 of investigation. Phase 2 trials include controlled clinical studies conducted to evaluate the effectiveness of the product for a particular indication in patients with the disease or condition and to determine the common or short-term side effects and risks associated with it. Phase 3 trials gather additional information about effectiveness and safety that is necessary to evaluate the overall risk-benefit relationship of the product and to provide an adequate basis for physician labeling. Studies submitted for the smaller grants (\$100,000) may be phase 1, 2, or 3 trials. Budgets for all years of requested support may not exceed the \$200,000 or \$100,000 limitation, whichever is applicable.

Applications must propose a clinical trial of one therapy for one indication. The applicant must provide supporting evidence that a sufficient quantity of the product to be investigated is available to the applicant in the form needed for the clinical trial. The applicant must also provide supporting evidence that the patient population has been surveyed and that there is reasonable assurance that the necessary number of eligible patients is available for the study.

Funds may be requested in the budget for travel to FDA to meet with reviewing division staff about product development progress.

II. Human Subject Protection and Informed Consent

A. Research Involving Human Subjects

Applicants are advised that the section on human subjects in the application kit entitled "Section C. Specific Instructions—Forms, Item 4, Human Subjects," on pages 7 and 8 of the application kit, should be carefully reviewed for the certification of

Institutional Review Board (IRB) approval requirements. Documentation of IRB approval for every participating center is required to be on file with the Grants Management Officer, FDA. The goal should be to include enough information on the protection of human subjects in a sufficiently clear fashion so reviewers will have adequate material to make a complete review.

B. Informed Consent

Consent and/or assent forms, and any additional information to be given to a subject, should accompany the grant application. Information that is given to the subject or the subject's representative must be in language that the subject or his or her representative can understand. No informed consent, whether oral or written, may include any language through which the subject or the subject's representative is made to waive any of the subject's legal rights, or by which the subject or representative releases or appears to release the investigator, the sponsor, or the institution or its agent from liability.

If a study involves both adults and children, separate consent forms should be provided for the adults and the parents or guardians of the children.

C. Elements of Informed Consent

The elements of informed consent are stated in the regulations at 45 CFR 46.116 and 21 CFR 50.25 as follows:

1. Basic Elements of Informed Consent

In seeking informed consent, the following information shall be provided to each subject:

(a) A statement that the study involves research, an explanation of the purposes of the research and the expected duration of the subject's participation, a description of the procedures to be followed, and identification of any procedures which are experimental.

(b) A description of any reasonably foreseeable risks or discomforts to the subject.

(c) A description of any benefits to the subject or to others which may reasonably be expected from the research.

(d) A disclosure of appropriate alternative procedures or courses of treatment, if any, that might be advantageous to the subject.

(e) A statement that describes the extent, if any, to which confidentiality of records identifying the subject will be maintained, and that notes the possibility that FDA may inspect the records.

(f) For research involving more than minimal risk, an explanation as to

whether any compensation and any medical treatments are available if injury occurs and, if so, what they consist of or where further information may be obtained.

(g) An explanation of whom to contact for answers to pertinent questions about the research and research subject's rights, and whom to contact in the event of research-related injury to the subject.

(h) A statement that participation is voluntary, that refusal to participate will involve no penalty or loss of benefits to which the subject is otherwise entitled, and that the subject may discontinue participation at any time without penalty or loss of benefits to which the subject is otherwise entitled.

2. Additional Elements of Informed Consent

When appropriate, one or more of the following elements of information shall also be provided to each subject:

(a) A statement that the particular treatment or procedure may involve risks to the subject (or the embryo or fetus, if the subject is or may become pregnant) which are currently unforeseeable.

(b) Anticipated circumstances under which the subject's participation may be terminated by the investigator without regard to the subject's consent.

(c) Any costs to the subject that may result from participation in the research.

(d) The consequences of a subject's decision to withdraw from the research and procedures for orderly termination of participation by the subject.

(e) A statement that significant new findings developed during the course of the research which may relate to the subject's willingness to continue participation will be provided to the subject.

(f) The approximate number of subjects involved in the study.

The informed consent requirements are not intended to preempt any applicable Federal, State, or local laws which require additional information to be disclosed for informed consent to be legally effective.

Nothing in the notice is intended to limit the authority of a physician to provide emergency medical care to the extent that a physician is permitted to do so under applicable Federal, State, or local law.

III. Reporting Requirements

An annual Financial Status Report (FSR) (SF-269) is required. The original and two copies of this report must be submitted to FDA's Grants Management Officer within 90 days of the budget expiration date of the grant. Failure to file the FSR in a timely fashion will be

grounds for suspension or termination of the grant.

For continuing grants, an annual program progress report is also required. The noncompeting continuation application (PHS 2590) will be considered the annual program progress report.

Additionally, all new and continuing grants must comply with all regulatory requirements necessary to maintain active status of their IND/IDE. This includes, but is not limited to, submission of an annual report to the appropriate regulatory review division within the FDA. Failure to meet regulatory requirements will be grounds for suspension or termination of the grant.

Program monitoring of grantees will be conducted on an ongoing basis and written reports will be prepared by the project officer. The monitoring may be in the form of telephone conversations between the project officer/grants management specialist and the principal investigator. Periodic site visits with appropriate officials of the grantee organization may also be conducted. The results of these reports will be recorded in the official grant file and may be available to the grantee upon request consistent with FDA disclosure regulations. Additionally, the grantee organization will be required to comply with all special terms and conditions which state that future funding of the study will be contingent on recommendations from the OPD Project Officer verifying that: (1) There has been adequate progress toward enrollment, based on specific circumstances of the study; (2) there is an adequate supply of the product/device; and (3) there is continued compliance with all FDA regulatory requirements for the trial (e.g., annual report to IND/IDE file, communication of all protocol changes to the appropriate FDA Center, etc.).

A final program progress report, FSR, and Invention Statement must be submitted within 90 days after the expiration of the project period as noted on the Notice of Grant Award.

IV. Mechanism of Support

A. Award Instrument

Support will be in the form of a grant. All awards will be subject to all policies and requirements that govern the research grant programs of PHS, including the provisions of 42 CFR part 52 and 45 CFR parts 74 and 92. The regulations issued under Executive Order 12372 do not apply to this program.

All grant awards are subject to applicable requirements for clinical

investigations imposed by sections 505, 507, 512, and 515 of the act (21 U.S.C. 355, 357, 360b, and 360e), section 351 of the PHS act (42 U.S.C. 262), and regulations issued under any of these sections.

B. Eligibility

These grants are available to any public or private nonprofit entity (including State and local units of government) and any for-profit entity. For-profit entities must commit to excluding fees or profit in their request for support to receive grant awards. Organizations described in section 501(c)(4) of the Internal Revenue Code of 1968 that engage in lobbying are not eligible to receive grant awards.

C. Length of Support

The length of the study will depend upon the nature of the study. For those studies with an expected duration of more than 1 year, a second or third year of noncompetitive continuation of support will depend on: (1) Performance during the preceding year; (2) the availability of Federal funds; and, (3) compliance with regulatory requirements of the IND/IDE.

D. Funding Plan

The number of studies funded will depend on the quality of the applications received and the availability of Federal funds to support the projects. Before an award will be made, OPD will verify the active status of the IND/IDE for the proposed study. If the IND/IDE for the proposed study is not active or if an annual report has not been submitted to the IND file in the last 12 months, no award will be made. Further, documentation of IRB approvals for all performance sites must be on file with the Grants Management Officer, FDA (address above), before an award can be made.

V. Review Procedure and Criteria

A. Review Method

All applications submitted in response to this request for applications (RFA) will first be reviewed by grants management and program staff for responsiveness to this RFA. If applications are found to be nonresponsive, they will be returned to the applicant without further consideration.

Responsive applications will be reviewed and evaluated for scientific and technical merit by an ad hoc panel of experts in the subject field of the specific application. Responsive applications will also be subject to a second level of review by a National Advisory Council for concurrence with

the recommendations made by the first-level reviewers, and funding decisions will be made by the Commissioner of Food and Drugs.

B. Program Review Criteria

Applications will be evaluated by program and grants management staff for responsiveness. Applications considered nonresponsive will be returned to the applicant, without being reviewed. Applicants are strongly encouraged to contact the FDA to resolve any questions regarding criteria prior to the submission of their application. All questions of a technical or scientific nature must be directed to the OPD program staff and all questions of an administrative or financial nature must be directed to the grants management staff. (See the "**For Further Information Contact**" section at the beginning of this document.) Responsiveness will be based on the following criteria:

(1) The application must propose a clinical trial intended to provide safety and/or efficacy data of one therapy for one orphan indication. Additionally, there must be an explanation in the "Background and Significance" section of how the proposed study will either facilitate product approval or provide essential data needed for product development.

(2) The prevalence, not incidence, of population to be served by the product must be fewer than 200,000 individuals in the United States. The applicant should include, in the "Background and Significance" section, a detailed explanation supplemented by authoritative references in support of the prevalence figure. If the product has been designated by FDA as an orphan product for the proposed indication, a statement of that fact will suffice. Diagnostic tests and vaccines will qualify only if the population of intended use is fewer than 200,000 individuals in the United States per annum.

(3) The number assigned to the IND/IDE for the proposed study should appear on the face page of the application with the title of the project. Only medical foods that do not require premarket approval are exempt from this requirement. The IND/IDE must be in active status and in compliance with all regulatory requirements of the FDA at the time of submission of the application. In order to meet this requirement, the original IND/IDE application, pertinent amendments, and the protocol for the proposed study must have been received by the appropriate FDA reviewing division a minimum of 30 days prior to the due

date of the grant application. Studies of already approved products, evaluating new orphan indications, must also have an active IND. Exempt IND's must have their status changed to active to be eligible for this program. If the sponsor of the IND/IDE is other than the principal investigator listed on the application, a letter from the sponsor verifying access to the IND/IDE is required, and both the application's principal investigator and the study protocol must have been submitted to the IND/IDE.

(4) The requested budget should be within the limits (either \$100,000 in direct costs for each year for up to 3 years for any phase study, or \$200,000 in direct costs for each year for up to 3 years for phase 2 or 3 studies) as stated in this request for applications.

(5) Consent and/or assent forms, and any additional information to be given to a subject, should be included in the grant application.

(6) All applicants should follow guidelines specified in the PHS 398 Grant Application kit.

C. Scientific/Technical Review Criteria

The ad hoc expert panel will provide the first level of review. The application will be judged on the following scientific and technical merit criteria:

(1) The soundness of the rationale for the proposed study;

(2) The quality and appropriateness of the study design to include the rationale for the statistical procedures;

(3) The statistical justification for the number of patients chosen for the trial, based on the proposed outcome measures and the appropriateness of the statistical procedures to be used in analysis of the results;

(4) The adequacy of the evidence that the proposed number of eligible subjects can be recruited in the requested timeframe;

(5) The qualifications of the investigator and support staff, and the resources available to them;

(6) The evidence that a sufficient quantity of the product is available to the applicant in the form needed for the investigation. A current letter from the supplier as an appendix will be acceptable;

(7) The adequacy of the justification for the request for financial support;

(8) The adequacy of plans for complying with regulations for protection of human subjects; and

(9) The ability of the applicant to complete the proposed study within its budget and within time limitations stated in this RFA.

The priority score will be based on the scientific/technical review criteria

in section V.C of this document. In addition, the reviewers may advise the program staff concerning the appropriateness of the proposal to the goals of the OPD Grant Program described in section I of this document "Program Research Goals."

D. Award Criteria

Resources for this program are limited. Therefore, should two or more applications be received and approved by FDA which propose duplicative or very similar studies, FDA will support only the study with the best score.

VI. Submission Requirements

The original and five copies of the completed Grant Application Form PHS 398 (Rev. 5/95) or the original and two copies of the PHS 5161 (Rev. 7/92) for State and local governments, with copies of the appendices for each of the copies, should be delivered to Robert L. Robins (address above). State and local governments may choose to use the PHS 398 application form in lieu of the PHS 5161. Application receipt dates are October 15, 1997, and March 15, 1998. If the receipt date falls on a weekend, it will be extended to Monday; if the date falls on a holiday, it will be extended to the following work day. No supplemental or addendum material will be accepted after the receipt date. Evidence of final IRB approval will be accepted for the file after the receipt date.

The outside of the mailing package and item 2 of the application face page should be labeled, "Response to RFA FDA OP-98-1".

If an application for the same study was submitted in response to the previous RFA, a submission in response to this RFA will be considered a request to withdraw the previous application. Applications originally submitted for the October closing date will also be administratively withdrawn, if resubmitted the following March. Resubmissions are treated as new applications; therefore, the applicant may wish to address the issues presented in the previous summary statements.

VII. Method of Application

A. Submission Instructions

Applications will be accepted during normal working hours, 8 a.m. to 4:30 p.m., Monday through Friday, on or before the established receipt dates.

Applications will be considered received on time if sent or mailed on or before the receipt dates as evidenced by a legible U.S. Postal Service dated postmark or a legible date receipt from

a commercial carrier, unless they arrive too late for orderly processing. Private metered postmarks shall not be acceptable as proof of timely mailing. Applications not received on time will not be considered for review and will be returned to the applicant. (Applicants should note that the U.S. Postal Service does not uniformly provide dated postmarks. Before relying on this method, applicants should check with their local post office.)

Do not send applications to the Division of Research Grants, National Institutes of Health (NIH). Any application that is sent to the NIH, that is then forwarded to the FDA and received after the applicable due date, will be deemed unresponsive and returned to the applicant. Instructions for completing the application forms can be found on the NIH home page on the Internet (address <http://www.nih.gov/grants/phs398/phs398.html>; the forms can be found at <http://www.nih.gov/grants/phs398/forms-toc.html>). However, as noted above, applications are not to be mailed to the NIH. Applicants are advised that the FDA does not adhere to the page limitations or the type size and line spacing requirements imposed by the NIH on its applications. Applications must be submitted via mail delivery as stated above. FDA is unable to receive applications via the Internet.

B. Format for Application

Submission of the application must be on Grant Application Form PHS 398 (Rev. 5/95). All "General Instructions" and "Specific Instructions" in the application kit should be followed with the exception of the receipt dates and the mailing label address. Do not send applications to the Division of Research Grants, NIH. Applications from State and Local Governments may be submitted on Form PHS 5161 (Rev. 7/92) or Form PHS 398 (Rev. 5/95).

The face page of the application should reflect the request for applications number RFA-FDA-OP-98-1. The title of the proposed study should include the name of the product and the disease/disorder to be studied along with the IND/IDE number.

Data included in the application, if restricted with the legend specified below, may be entitled to confidential treatment as trade secret or confidential commercial information within the meaning of the Freedom of Information Act (5 U.S.C. 552(b)(4)) and FDA's implementing regulations (21 CFR 20.61).

Information collection requirements requested on Form PHS 398 and the instructions have been submitted by the

PHS to the Office of Management and Budget (OMB) and were approved and assigned OMB control number 0925-0001.

C. Legend

Unless disclosure is required by the Freedom of Information Act as amended (5 U.S.C. 552) as determined by the freedom of information officials of the Department of Health and Human Services or by a court, data contained in the portions of this application which have been specifically identified by page number, paragraph, etc., by the applicant as containing restricted information shall not be used or disclosed except for evaluation purposes.

Dated: June 30, 1997.

William K. Hubbard,

Associate Commissioner for Policy Coordination.

[FR Doc. 97-17799 Filed 7-8-97; 8:45 am]

BILLING CODE 4160-01-P

DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH AND HUMAN SERVICES

Food and Drug Administration

[Docket No. 97D-0267]

Guidance for Industry on Expiration Dating and Stability Testing of Solid Oral Dosage Form Drugs Containing Iron; Availability

AGENCY: Food and Drug Administration, HHS.

ACTION: Notice.

SUMMARY: The Food and Drug Administration (FDA) is announcing the availability of a guidance document entitled "Guidance for Industry: Expiration Dating and Stability Testing of Solid Oral Dosage Form Drugs Containing Iron." The guidance document provides information to manufacturers of iron-containing drug products who are affected by a final rule that requires label warning statements and unit-dose packaging for solid oral drug products that contain 30 milligrams (mg) or more of iron per dosage unit. The guidance document describes the circumstances under which the agency does not intend to object, for a limited period of time, to modified expiration dating by drug manufacturers and packagers who are required to package their products into unit-dose containers under the final rule.

DATES: Written comments may be submitted at any time. The agency does

not expect to be guided by the recommendations in this guidance document after July 15, 1999.

ADDRESSES: Submit written requests for single copies of "Guidance for Industry: Expiration Dating and Stability Testing of Solid Oral Dosage Form Drugs Containing Iron" to the Drug Information Branch (HFD-210), Center for Drug Evaluation and Research, Food and Drug Administration, 5600 Fishers Lane, Rockville, MD 20857. Send one self-addressed adhesive label to assist that office in processing your requests.

FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT: Barry Rothman, Center for Drug Evaluation and Research (HFD-325), Food and Drug Administration, 7520 Standish Pl., Rockville, MD 20855, 301-594-0098.

SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION: FDA is announcing the availability of a guidance document entitled "Guidance for Industry: Expiration Dating and Stability Testing of Solid Oral Dosage Form Drugs Containing Iron." The purpose of this guidance document is to describe an approach to stability testing and expiration dating for a limited class of iron-containing products for certain manufacturers and packagers of drug products containing iron. In the **Federal Register** of January 15, 1997 (62 FR 2218), FDA issued a final rule entitled "Iron-Containing Supplements and Drugs: Label Warning Statements and Unit-Dose Packaging Requirements" (hereinafter called the iron regulations). The iron regulations, effective July 15, 1997, require label warning statements and unit-dose packaging for solid oral drug products that contain 30 mg or more of iron per dosage unit.

FDA requires that drug products bear an expiration date determined by appropriate stability testing §§ 211.137 and 211.166 (21 CFR 211.137 and 211.166). Drug product stability needs to be evaluated over time in the same container-closure system that will be used in the marketing of the product, and accelerated stability studies can be used to support tentative expiration dates in the event that full shelf life studies are not available. When a firm changes the packaging of a drug product, stability testing must be performed on the product in its new packaging, and expiration dating must reflect the results of the new stability testing.

To meet the requirements of the iron regulations, all manufacturers of solid oral drug products that contain 30 mg or more of iron per dosage unit must package their products in unit-dose packaging. As a result, these

manufacturers must determine an appropriate expiration date for that packaging. Because the final iron regulations were published only 6 months before they were to take effect, accelerated stability testing may be necessary to justify an expiration date of more than 6 months. However, accelerated stability studies are impractical for some drug products containing iron, especially multivitamin products, because such products often do not perform well under the artificially stressful conditions of accelerated studies. For these drug products, real-time stability testing may be the only method to determine an appropriate expiration date. To minimize the burden faced by those manufacturers and packagers who have made good faith efforts to comply with the stability testing requirements but were unable to do so, FDA advises that, for a limited period of time, it does not intend to object if such a firm fails to comply with §§ 211.137 and 211.166, so long as it establishes expiration dates and stability testing protocols under the specific approach described in the guidance document. FDA expects that sufficient stability testing will be performed in a timely fashion; therefore, the agency does not expect to be guided by the recommendations in this guidance document after July 15, 1999.

This guidance document represents the agency's current thinking on expiration dating for solid oral drug products containing 30 mg or more of iron. It does not create or confer any rights for or on any person and does not operate to bind FDA or the public. An alternative approach may be used if such approach satisfies the requirement of the applicable statute, regulations, or both.

Interested persons may, at any time, submit written comments on the guidance to the Dockets Management Branch (HFA-305), Food and Drug Administration, 12420 Parklawn Dr., rm. 1-23, Rockville, MD 20857. Two copies of any comments are to be submitted, except that individuals may submit one copy. Requests and comments are to be identified with the docket number found in brackets in the heading of this document. The guidance and received comments may be seen in the office above between 9 a.m. and 4 p.m., Monday through Friday.

An electronic version of this guidance is also available on the Internet using the World Wide Web at <http://www.fda.gov/cder/guidance.htm>.