

	As of December 31			As of December 31			As of December 31		
	1996	1997	1998	1996	1997	1998	1996	1997	1998
Ratio of assets less liabilities to expenditures (in percent) <sup>3</sup> .....	35.8	38.0	31.3	38.4	44.5	43.2	33.5	32.3	20.6

<sup>1</sup> As recognized for payment under the program.

<sup>2</sup> Increase in the number of services received per enrollee and greater relative use of more expensive services.

<sup>3</sup> Ratio of assets less liabilities at the end of the year to total incurred expenditures during the following year, expressed as a percent.

#### IV. Waiver of Notice of Proposed Rulemaking

The Medicare statute, as discussed previously, requires publication of the monthly actuarial rates and the Part B premium amount in September. The amounts are determined according to the statute. As has been our custom, we use general notices, rather than formal notice and comment rulemaking procedures, to make such announcements. In doing so, we acknowledge that, under the Administrative Procedure Act, interpretive rules, general statements of policy, and rules of agency organization, procedure, or practice are excepted from the requirements of notice and comment rulemaking.

We considered publishing a proposed notice to provide a period for public comment. However, we may waive that procedure if we find good cause that prior notice and comment are impracticable, unnecessary, or contrary to the public interest. We find that the procedure for notice and comment is unnecessary because the formula used to calculate the SMI premium is statutorily directed, and we can exercise no discretion in following that formula. Moreover, the statute establishes the time period for which the premium rates will apply, and delaying publication of the SMI premium rate would be contrary to the public interest. Therefore, we find good cause to waive publication of a proposed notice and solicitation of public comments.

In accordance with the provisions of Executive Order 12866, this notice was reviewed by the Office of Management and Budget.

(Section 1839 of the Social Security Act; 42 U.S.C. 1395r)

(Catalog of Federal Domestic Assistance Program No. 93.774, Medicare—Supplementary Medical Insurance)

Dated: October 13, 1997.

**Nancy-Ann Min DeParle,**

*Deputy Administrator, Health Care Financing Administration.*

Dated: October 21, 1997.

**Donna E. Shalala,**

*Secretary.*

[FR Doc. 97-29031 Filed 11-3-97; 8:45 am]

BILLING CODE 4120-01-P

#### DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH AND HUMAN SERVICES

##### National Institutes of Health

#### Notice of Availability of Environmental Assessment and Finding of No Significant Impact for Actions to be Taken Under the NIH Guidelines for Research Involving Recombinant DNA Molecules

Notice is hereby given of the availability of an Environmental Assessment (EA) and Finding of No Significant Impact (FONSI) for public review. The EA is for actions to be taken under the NIH Guidelines for Research Involving Recombinant DNA Molecules (59 FR 34496, amended 59 FR 40170, 60 FR 20726, 61 FR 1482, 61 FR 10004, 62 FR 4782). Under the actions, the National Institutes of Health (NIH) will relinquish its approval of individual human gene transfer protocols to the Food and Drug Administration, which has statutory authority for such approvals. Instead, the NIH will emphasize its role as the focal point for policy discussion and review of scientific, safety, social, and ethical issues arising from human gene transfer research. The EA finds that these actions will not significantly affect the quality of the human environment.

Copies of the EA and FONSI can be viewed in the NIH Environmental Reading Room, Building 31, Room 2B04, 9000 Rockville Pike, Bethesda, MD 20892. Additional copies of the EA and FONSI are available for viewing in the NIH Office of Recombinant DNA Activities (ORDA), 6000 Executive Boulevard, Suite 302, Bethesda, MD 20892-7010.

For further information, contact Debra Knorr, Deputy Director, Office of Recombinant DNA Activities, National Institutes of Health, MSC 7010, 6000 Executive Boulevard, Suite 302, Bethesda, Maryland 20892-7010, Phone 301-496-9838, FAX 301-496-9839.

Dated: October 26, 1997.

**Lana Skirboll,**

*Associate Director for Science Policy, National Institutes of Health.*

[FR Doc. 97-29072 Filed 11-3-97; 8:45 am]

BILLING CODE 4140-01-P

#### DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH AND HUMAN SERVICES

##### National Institutes of Health

#### National Eye Institute; Notice of Closed Meeting

Pursuant to Section 10(d) of the Federal Advisory Committee Act, as amended (5 U.S.C. Appendix 2), notice is hereby given of the following National Eye Institute Special Emphasis Panel (SEP) meeting:

*Name of SEP:* Clinical Research.

*Date:* November 24, 1997.

*Time:* 8:30 a.m.

*Place:* National Eye Institute, Executive Plaza South, Suite 350, 6120 Executive Blvd., Bethesda, MD 20892-7164.

*Contact Person:* Andrew P. Mariani, Ph.D., Executive Plaza South, Room 350, 6120 Executive Blvd., Bethesda, MD 20892-7164, (303) 496-5561.

*Purpose/Agenda:* Review of Grant Applications.

The meeting will be closed in accordance with the provisions set forth in secs. 552b(c)(4) and 552b(c)(6), Title 5, U.S.C. Applications and/or proposals and the discussions could reveal confidential trade secrets or commercial property such as patentable material and personal information concerning individuals associated with the applications and/or proposals, the disclosure of which would constitute a clearly unwarranted invasion of personal privacy.

(Catalog of Federal Domestic Assistance Program No. 93.867, Vision Research: National Institutes of Health)

Dated: October 28, 1997.

**LaVerne Y. Stringfield,**

*Committee Management Officer, NIH.*

[FR Doc. 97-29076 Filed 11-3-97; 8:45 am]

BILLING CODE 4140-01-M

#### DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH AND HUMAN SERVICES

##### National Institutes of Health

#### National Heart, Lung, and Blood Institute, Notice of Meeting of Board of Scientific Counselors

Pursuant to Pub. L. 92-463, notice is hereby given of the meeting of the Board of Scientific Counselors, National Heart, Lung, and Blood Institute at 8:00 a.m. on December 11-12, 1997, National Institutes of Health, 9000 Rockville