

DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH AND HUMAN SERVICES
National Toxicology Program; National Toxicology Program Special Emphasis Panel; Notice of Establishment

Pursuant to the Federal Advisory Committee Act, as amended (5 U.S.C. Appendix 2), the Director, National Toxicology Program (NTP), announces the establishment of the National Toxicology Program Special Emphasis Panel (NTPSEP) by the Secretary, DHHS.

The NTP Center for the Evaluation of Alternative Toxicological Methods (Center), on an as needed basis, will convene a group of expert scientists to accomplish the independent peer review of new test methods or evaluate existing test methods for toxicological assessments. Peer review panels will be asked to develop scientific consensus on the usefulness of test methods to generate information for specific human health and/or ecological risk assessment purposes. They will address the biological relevance of the new test to the toxicity of interest, and address how and when the new test method can partially or fully replace existing methods or approaches. When appropriate, panels will be asked to identify additional validation studies necessary to adequately evaluate a method, and to identify additional research necessary to support the development of mechanism-based test methods. It is anticipated that expert review panels will also be convened to evaluate the adequacy of current methods, and to evaluate proposed validation studies. Agencies will use this information to establish priorities for appropriate research, development, and validation efforts in collaboration with interested parties.

Duration of this Committee is continuing unless formally determined by the Secretary, DHHS, that termination would be in the best public interest.

Dated: January 21, 1999.

Kenneth Olden,

Director, National Toxicology Program.

[FR Doc. 99-2247 Filed 1-29-99; 8:45 am]

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DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH AND HUMAN SERVICES
Office of the Secretary
Notice of Interest Rate on Overdue Debts

Section 30.13 of the Department of Health and Human Services' claims collection regulations (45 CFR part 30) provides that the Secretary shall charge an annual rate of interest as fixed by the Secretary of the Treasury after taking into consideration private consumer rates of interest prevailing on the date that HHS becomes entitled to recovery. The rate generally cannot be lower than the Department of Treasury's current value of funds rate or the applicable rate determined from the "Schedule of Certified Interest Rates with Range of Maturities." This rate may be revised quarterly by the Secretary of the Treasury and shall be published quarterly by the Department of Health and Human Services in the **Federal Register**.

The Secretary of the Treasury has certified a rate of 13¾% for the quarter ended December 21, 1998. This interest rate will remain in effect until such time as the Secretary of the Treasury notifies HHS of any change.

Dated: January 26, 1999.

George Strader,

Deputy Assistant Secretary, Finance.

[FR Doc. 99-2311 Filed 1-29-99; 8:45 am]

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DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH AND HUMAN SERVICES
Agency for Toxic Substances and Disease Registry

[ATSDR-142]

Availability of Chemical Specific Consultation

AGENCY: Agency for Toxic Substances and Disease Registry (ATSDR), Department of Health and Human Services (HHS).

ACTION: Notice of availability.

SUMMARY: The Comprehensive Environmental Response, Compensation, and Liability Act of 1980 (CERCLA), as amended by the Superfund Amendments and Reauthorization Act of 1986 (SARA), section 104(i)(4) [42 U.S.C. 9604(i)(4)] directs the Administrator of ATSDR to provide consultations upon request on health issues relating to exposure to hazardous or toxic substances, on the basis of available information, to the

Administrator of EPA, State officials, and local officials. This notice announces the availability of a chemical specific public health consultation titled "Hazardous Substance Exposures and Autism" that ATSDR has prepared for public comment. The consultation is a review of the available scientific literature pertaining to what is known about the association between exposure to hazardous substances and autism.

DATES: In order to be considered, comments on this draft consultation must be received on or before March 3, 1999. Comments received after the close of the public comment period will be considered at the discretion of ATSDR based upon what is deemed to be in the best interest of the general public.

ADDRESSES: Requests for copies of the draft public health consultation should be sent to the ATSDR Information Center, Division of Toxicology, Agency for Toxic Substances and Disease Registry, Mailstop E-57, 1600 Clifton Road, NE., Atlanta, Georgia 30333. Written comments regarding the draft public health consultation should be sent to the same address. ATSDR reserves the right to provide only one copy of the draft consultation, free of charge.

Written comments submitted in response to this notice should bear the docket control number ATSDR-142. Because all public comments regarding ATSDR public health consultations are available for public inspection [after the consultation is published in final], no confidential business information should be submitted in response to this notice.

FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT: ATSDR Information Center, Division of Toxicology, Agency for Toxic Substances and Disease Registry, Mailstop E-57, 1600 Clifton Road, NE., Atlanta, Georgia 30333, telephone (404) 639-6357.

SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION: The Superfund Amendments and Reauthorization Act (SARA) (Pub. L. 99-499) amends the Comprehensive Environmental Response, Compensation, and Liability Act (CERCLA or Superfund) (42 U.S.C. 9601 *et seq.*) by establishing certain responsibilities for the ATSDR and the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) with regard to hazardous substances which are most commonly found at facilities on the CERCLA National Priorities List (NPL). Among these responsibilities is that the Administrator of ATSDR prepare consultations upon request on health issues relating to exposure to hazardous or toxic substances, on the basis of available

information, to the Administrator of EPA, State officials, and local officials. A public health consultation provides advice on a specific public health issue related to real or possible human exposure to toxic material and is a way for ATSDR to respond rapidly to requests for assistance.

ATSDR has prepared this document titled "Hazardous Substance Exposures and Autism" in response to a request from U.S. Representative Christopher Smith and residents of Brick Township, New Jersey who are concerned that hazardous substances may be present in the environment of Brick Township and that an increase in the number of children with autism may be attributable to exposure to these substances. This document was placed in a repository in Brick, New Jersey and released to the public via a mail-out on December 18, 1998.

Dated: January 26, 1999.

Georgi Jones,

Director, Office of Policy and External Affairs, Agency for Toxic Substances and Disease Registry.

[FR Doc. 99-2267 Filed 1-29-99; 8:45 am]

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DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH AND HUMAN SERVICES

Centers for Disease Control and Prevention

[INFO-99-08]

Proposed Data Collections Submitted for Public Comment and Recommendations

In compliance with the requirement of section 3506(c)(2)(A) of the Paperwork Reduction Act of 1995 for opportunity for public comment on proposed data collection projects, the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) will publish periodic summaries of proposed projects. To request more information on the proposed projects or to obtain a copy of the data collection plans and instruments, call the CDC Reports Clearance Officer on (404) 639-7090.

Comments are invited on: (a) Whether the proposed collection of information is necessary for the proper performance of the functions of the agency, including whether the information shall have practical utility; (b) the accuracy of the agency's estimate of the burden of the proposed collection of information; (c) ways to enhance the quality, utility, and clarity of the information to be collected; and (d) ways to minimize the burden of the collection of information on respondents, including through the use of automated collection techniques for other forms of information technology. Send comments to Seleda Perryman, CDC Assistant Reports Clearance Officer, 1600 Clifton Road, MS-D24, Atlanta, GA 30333. Written

comments should be received within 60 days of this notice.

Proposed Project

1. An Evaluation Study Of An HIV/STD Prevention Curriculum For Youth Attending Alternative Schools To Be Conducted From 1999 To 2002—New—National Center for Chronic Disease Prevention and Health Promotion (NCCDPHP) Division of Adolescent and School Health. The purpose of this request is to obtain OMB clearance to conduct a randomized trial of a curriculum to reduce behaviors related to HIV/STD transmission among 14 to 18 year old students in 30 court and community schools in Northern California. Participants will respond to surveys of attitudes, knowledge, and behavior related to HIV/STD transmission and prevention at baseline and at 6, 12, and 18 month post-tests. Reduction of behaviors among adolescents related to HIV and STD transmission, and reduction of the prevalence of STDs is the focus of at least seven objectives in *Healthy People 2000: Midcourse Review and 1995 Revisions*. There have been few studies assessing the effectiveness of curricula to reduce HIV/STD related risk behaviors in this high-risk adolescent population. Data gathered from this study will provide information about how HIV/STD risk behavior may be effectively reduced among alternative school students.

The total cost to respondents is estimated at \$50,400 assuming a minimum wage for students of \$5.25 in the study period.

Respondents	Number of respondents	Number of responses per respondent	Burden per response	Total burden hours
Alternative school students	2400	4	1.0	9600
Total	9600

2. Use of Laboratory Information Systems (LIS) to Transmit Infectious Diseases Test Results (HL7 Messages) to Public Health Agencies— New—Public Health Program Office (PHPO), Division of Laboratory Systems. CDC proposes to gather data through the use of a mail/telephone survey of all United States vendors of LIS used for recording and processing microbiology data. The use of a mail/telephone-assisted survey instrument will be an efficient, cost-effective approach for performing the data collection. No computerized data collection systems have been developed for this survey because the number of

respondents is small. Instead, trained telephone interviewers knowledgeable about LIS and about the specific messages that CDC is interested in transmitting will gather data. The interviewers will have the flexibility to answer technical questions, probe for further information and provide explanations of coding vocabularies, security needs and other issues that may not be readily understood by the LIS vendors.

The data will provide the government, LIS vendors, laboratory practitioners, committees that make recommendations regarding messaging and other

stakeholders with information about the projected costs to vendors and laboratories and about the time frames required for and the barriers to implementation.

CDC will use the survey to gauge the technological readiness and the cost factors affecting secure electronic transmission of infectious disease data to government agencies. These transmissions will act as part of an early warning system leading to more timely response to infectious disease outbreaks. This survey responds to President Clinton's request for the increased use of modern technology to identify and