DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH AND HUMAN SERVICES

National Institute of Health

Propsoed Collection; Comment Request; Evaluation of the NIDCD Partnership Program

SUMMARY: 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 National Institute on Deafness and Other Communication Disorders (NIDCD), the National Institutes of Health (NIH), will publish periodic summaries of proposed projects to be submitted to the Office of Management and Budget (OMB) for review and approval.

Proposed Collection:

Title: Evaluation of the NIDCD Partnership Program. *Type of Information Collection Request*: NEW. *Need and Use of Information Collection*: The NIDCD was established to support biomedical and behavioral research and research training in hearing, smell, balance, taste, voice, speech and language. Although minorities and women will dominate the work force within the next decade, both groups are underrepresented in the science and health professional field. Because of this concern, the NIDCD, with assistance from the Office of Research on Minority Health, established the Partnership Program in 1994 to increase the number of minority scientists and health care professionals doing research on communication and communication disorders. The proposed survey will yield data about: (1) Reasons for participation in the program; (2) satisfaction of participants with the program and (3) how participation in the program has lead to the pursuit of a career in the health field. The survey will track the Partnership Program's success at increasing the number of women and minorities who are scientists. *Frequency of Response*: One. *Affected Public*: Individuals. *Type of Respondent*: Partnership Program Participants. The annual reporting burden is as follows: *Estimated Number of Respondents*: 76; *Estimated Number of Responses per Respondent*: 1; *Average Burden Hours Per Response*: 0.5; and *Estimated Total Annual Burden Hours Requested*: 38. The annualized cost to respondents is estimated at: $380. There are no Capital Costs to report. There are no Operating or Maintenance Costs to report.

(Note: The following table is acceptable for the Respondent and Burden Estimate Information, if appropriate, instead of the text as shown above.)

Type of respondents	Estiamted number of respondents	Estimated number of responses per respondent	Average burden hours per response	Estimated total annual burden hours requested
Initial program participant survey	16	1	0.5	8
Follow up survey of participant	60	1	0.5	30
Total	76	.....	.....	38

Request for Comments

Written comments and/or suggestions from the public and affected agencies are invited on one or more of the following points: (1) Whether the proposed collection of information is necessary for fulfillment of the NIDCD mission, including whether the information will have practical utility; (2) the accuracy of the estimate of the burden of the proposed data collection, including the validity of the methodology; (3) ways to enhance the quality, utility, and clarity of the data collection and (4) ways to minimize the burden of the collection of information on the respondents, including appropriate use of automated collection techniques and information technology.

FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT: To request more information on the proposed project or to obtain a copy of the data collection plans and instruments, contact Ms. Kay Johnson, EEO Officer, Office of Equal Employment Opportunity, NIDCD, NIH, Building 31, Room 3C08, 31 Center Drive, Bethesda, MD 20892, or call non-toll-free number (301) 402–6415 or E-mail your request, including your address to: johnsoka@nidcd.nih.gov

COMMENTS DUE DATE: Comments regarding this information collection are best assured of having their full effect if received on or before July 12, 1999.

SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION: Under the PRA (44 U.S.C. 3501–3520), Federal agencies must obtain approval from the Office of Management and Budget (OMB) for each collection of information they conduct or sponsor. ''Collection of information'' is defined in 44 U.S.C. 3502(3) and 5 CFR 1320.3(c) and includes agency requests or requirements that the public submit reports, keep records, or provide information to a third party. Section 3506(c)(2)(A) of the PRA requires federal agencies to provide a 60-day notice in the **Federal Register** concerning proposed collections of information before submitting the collection of OMB for approval. To comply with this requirement, NIDCD is publishing notice of the proposed collection of information listed below.

With respect to the following collection of information, NIDCD invites comments on: (1) Whether the proposed collection of information is necessary for fulfillment of the NIDCD mission, including whether the information will have practical utility; (2) the accuracy of the estimate of the burden of the proposed data collection, including the validity of the methodology; (3) ways to enhance the quality, utility, and clarity of the data collection; and (4) ways to minimize the burden of the collection of information on the respondents, including appropriate use of automated collection techniques and information technology.

The NIDCD Partnership Program was designed to maximize research and research training opportunities for undergraduates, graduate and professional students, and faculty from populations that are underrepresented in the biomedical professions. Participants are recruited from four academic institutions that developed partnerships with the NIDCD: The University of Alaska System, The Atlanta University Center, Gallaudent University, and the University of Puerto Rico.

Anecdotal feedback indicates that program participants, mentors, and liaisons find the program to provide interesting and unique opportunities. However, there is little systematic evidence evaluating the level of the Program's success or failure. The proposed surveys will attempt to assess

how participants' experiences with the Partnership Program have influenced career and educational choices; current activities of participants (e.g., courses of study, jobs); benefits and costs of program participation to the program participants, mentors, and liaisons; and suggestions for improving the Program. This information will provide concrete evidence for continued funding of the Program.

Two separate surveys are proposed. The first survey will collect baseline information from participants as they enter the program. The baseline survey will explore participants' expectations and goals on entering the program, their current career and/or educational plans, and reasons for choosing to participate. The second survey will gather Follow up and tracking information of past participants and will be administered annually. This survey will ask about current contact information, current career and/or educational activities, satisfaction with the program, and whether expectations were met.

Potential respondents of either survey will be asked to participate in a telephone survey that should take less than 30 minutes to complete. Respondents who cannot schedule 30 minutes of time or have communications disorders which make telephone conversations difficult will be given the opportunity to respond by alternate means such as fax and e-mail. All participants from the inception of the program will be included in this evaluation process. Participants for 1999 have not yet been chosen, but it is anticipated that the total number of participants since 1994 will not exceed 70.

Dated: May 4, 1999.

David Kerr,

Executive Officer, National Institutes on Deafness and Other Communication Disorders.

[FR Doc. 99–11840 Filed 5–10–99; 8:45 am]

BILLING CODE 4140–01–M

DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH AND HUMAN SERVICES

National Institutes of Health

National Institute of Arthritis and Musculoskeletal and Skin Diseases; 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 meeting.

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

Name of Committee: National Institute of Arthritis and Musculoskeletal and Skin Diseases Special Emphasis Panel.

Date: May 7, 1999.

Time: 11 AM to 12:30 PM.

Agenda: To review and evaluate grant applications.

Place: 45 Natcher Bldg, Rm 5As.25u, Bethesda, MD 20892, (Telephone Conference Call).

Contact Person: Tommy L. Broadwater, PHD, Chief, Grants Review Branch, National Institutes of Health NIAMS, Natcher Bldg., Room 5As25U, Bethesda, MD 20892, 301–594–4952.

This notice is being published less than 15 days prior to the meeting due to the timing limitations imposed by the review and funding cycle.

(Catalogue of Federal Domestic Assistance Program Nos. 93.846, Arthritis, Musculoskeletal and Skin Diseases Research, National Institutes of Health, HHS)

Dated: May 5, 1999.

LaVerne Y. Stringfield,

Director, Office of Federal Advisory Committee Policy.

[FR Doc. 99–11838 Filed 5–10–99; 8:45 am]

BILLING CODE 4140–01–M

DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH AND HUMAN SERVICES

National Institutes of Health

Office of Recombinant DNA Activities; Recombinant DNA Research: Action Under the Guidelines

AGENCY: National Institutes of Health (NIH), PHS, DHHS.

ACTION: Notice of action under the NIH Guidelines for Research Involving Recombinant DNA Molecules (NIH Guidelines).

SUMMARY: This notice sets forth an action to be taken by the Director, National Institutes of Health (NIH), under the NIH Guidelines for Research Involving Recombinant DNA Molecules (59 FR 34496, amended 59 FR 40170, 60 FR 20762, 61 FR 1482, 61 FR 10004, 62 FR 4782, 62 FR 53335, 62 FR 56196, 62 FR 59032, 63 FR 8052, 63 FR 26018).

FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT: Background documentation and additional information can be obtained from the Office of Recombinant DNA Activities (ORDA), National Institutes of Health, MSC 7010, 6000 Executive Boulevard, Suite 302, Bethesda, Maryland 20892–7010, Phone 301–496–9838, FAX 301–496–9839. The ORDA web site is located at http://www.nih.gov/od/orda/ for further information about the office.

SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION: Today's action is being promulgated under the NIH Guidelines for Research Involving Recombinant DNA Molecules (NIH Guidelines). The proposed action was published for comment in the **Federal Register** on February 17, 1999 (64 FR 7964), and reviewed by the NIH Recombinant DNA Advisory Committee (RAC) at its meeting on March 11, 1999.

I. Amendment to Appendix B–I, Risk Group 1 (RG1) Agents

I–A. Background Information and Decisions on Action Under the NIH Guidelines

On December 11, 1998, ORDA received a facsimile from Dr. Margarita C. Curras-Collazo, University of California at Riverside, Riverside, California, requesting to lower the containment level (from Biosafety Level (BL) 2 to 1) for recombinant adeno-associated virus (AAV) vectors produced in the absence of helper viruses. Subsequent to this request, ORDA received a telephone call from Ms. Brenda Wong, Biological Safety Officer, University of California at San Diego, La Jolla, California, asking that this request be reconsidered due to the potential of insertional mutagenesis.

In response to this request, ORDA solicited the opinion of three AAV experts and the RAC Chair. All three AAV experts and the RAC Chair concurred that the BL1 level of physical containment is appropriate for recombinant AAV vectors produced in the absence of helper viruses. The rationale for this recommendation was based on the fact that experiments involving certain recombinant retroviral vectors, which insert randomly into the genome and could potentially cause insertional mutagenesis, are designated as BL1 agents.

Appendix B–I, Risk Group 1 (RG1) Agents, currently reads:

''RG1 agents are not associated with disease in healthy adult humans. Examples of RG1 agents include asporogenic Bacillus subtilis or Bacillus licheniformis (see Appendix C–IV–A, Bacillus subtilis or Bacillus licheniformis Host-Vector Systems, Exceptions), Escherichia coli-K12 (see Appendix C–II–A, Escherichia coli K–12 Host Vector Systems, Exceptions), and