

applications, the disclosure of which would constitute a clearly unwarranted invasion of personal privacy.

Name of Committee: National Institute of Child Health and Human Development Special Emphasis Panel, Regulation of Estradiol Production of Prostaglandin F2a.

Date: March 19, 2004.

Time: 2 p.m. to 3:30 p.m.

Agenda: To review and evaluate grant applications.

Place: National Institutes of Health, 6100 Executive Boulevard, Rockville, MD 20852, (Telephone Conference Call).

Contact Person: Jon M. Ranhand, Ph.D., Scientist Review Administrator, Division of Scientific Review, National Institute of Child Health and Human Development, NIH, 6100 Executive Boulevard, Room 5B01, Bethesda, MD 20892, (301) 435-6884, ranhandj@mail.nih.gov.

(Catalogue of Federal Domestic Assistance Program Nos. 93.864, Population Research; 93.865, Research for Mothers and Children; 93.929, Center for Medical Rehabilitation Research; 93.209, Contraception and Infertility Loan Repayment Program, National Institutes of Health. HHS)

Dated: February 18, 2004.

LaVerne Y. Stringfield,

Director, Office of Federal Advisory Committee Policy.

[FR Doc. 04-4084 Filed 2-24-04; 8:45 am]

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DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH AND HUMAN SERVICES

National Institutes of Health

National Institute of Diabetes and Digestive and Kidney Diseases; Notice of Closed Meetings

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 meetings.

The meetings 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 Diabetes and Digestive and Kidney Diseases Special Emphasis Panel, Osteoporosis and Vascular Calcification in ESRD.

Date: March 4, 2004.

Time: 3 p.m. to 4:30 p.m.

Agenda: To review and evaluate grant applications.

Place: National Institutes of Health, Two Democracy Plaza, 6707 Democracy Boulevard, Bethesda, MD 20892. (Telephone conference call.)

Contact Person: Lakshman Sankaran, PhD, Scientific Review Administrator, Review Branch, DEA, NIDDK, National Institutes of Health, Room 754, 6707 Democracy Boulevard, Bethesda, MD 20892-5452. (301) 594-7799; Is38z@nih.gov.

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.

Name of Committee: National Institute of Diabetes and Digestive Kidney Diseases Special Emphasis Panel, Small Grants in Digestive Diseases and Nutrition.

Date: March 31-April 1, 2004.

Time: 5 p.m. to 2 p.m.

Agenda: To review and evaluate grant applications.

Place: Residence Inn Bethesda, 7335 Wisconsin Avenue, Bethesda, MD 20814.

Contact Person: Maria E. Davila-Bloom, PhD, Scientific Review Administrator, Review Branch, DEA, NIDDK, National Institutes of Health, Room 758, 6707 Democracy Boulevard, Bethesda, MD 20892-5452. (301) 594-7637; davila-bloomm@extra.niddk.nih.gov.

Name of Committee: National Institute of Diabetes and Digestive and Kidney Diseases Special Emphasis Panel, Clinical Trials in Type 2 Diabetes.

Date: April 1, 2004.

Time: 12 p.m. to 1:30 p.m.

Agenda: To review and evaluate grant applications.

Place: National Institutes of Health, Two Democracy Plaza, 6707 Democracy Boulevard, Bethesda, MD 20892. (Telephone conference call.)

Contact Person: Maxine A. Lesniak, PhM, Scientific Review Administrator, Review Branch, DEA, NIDDK, National Institutes of Health, Room 756, 6707 Democracy Boulevard, Bethesda, MD 20892-5452. (301) 594-7792; lesniakm@extra.niddk.nih.gov.

Name of Committee: National Institute of Diabetes and Digestive and Kidney Diseases Special Emphasis Panel, Mechanisms of Upper Gut and Airway Interaction & Pathobiology of the Enteric System.

Date: April 6, 2004.

Time: 7:45 a.m. to 5 p.m.

Agenda: To review and evaluate grant applications.

Place: Crystal City Marriott, 2899 Jefferson Davis Highway, Arlington, VA 22202.

Contact Person: Michael W. Edwards, PhD, Scientific Review Administrator, Review Branch, DEA, NIDDK, National Institutes of Health, Room 750, 6707 Democracy Boulevard, Bethesda, MD 20892-5452. (301) 594-8886; edwardsm@extra.niddk.nih.gov.

Name of Committee: National Institute of Diabetes and Digestive and Kidney Diseases Special Emphasis Panel, Regulation of Intestinal Transport and Mechanisms of Intestinal-Microbial Interactions.

Date: April 7, 2004.

Time: 7:45 a.m. to 5 p.m.

Agenda: To review and evaluate grant applications.

Place: Crystal City Courtyard by Marriott, 2899 Jefferson Davis Hwy, Arlington, VA 22202.

Contact Person: Michael W. Edwards, PhD, Scientific Review Administrator, Review Branch, DEA, NIDDK, National Institutes of Health, Room 750, 6707 Democracy Boulevard, Bethesda, MD 20892-5452. (301) 594-8886, edwardsm@extra.niddk.nih.gov.

(Catalogue of Federal Domestic Assistance Program Nos. 93.847, Diabetes, Endocrinology and Metabolic Research; 93.848, Digestive Diseases and Nutrition Research; 93.849, Kidney Diseases, Urology and Hematology Research, National Institutes of Health, HHS.)

Dated: February 18, 2004.

LaVerne Y. Stringfield,

Director, Office of Federal Advisory Committee Policy.

[FR Doc. 04-4085 Filed 2-24-04; 8:45 am]

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DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH AND HUMAN SERVICES

National Institutes of Health

National Institute of Environmental Health Sciences; 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 Environmental Health Sciences Special Emphasis Panel, Environmental Justice (EJ): Partnerships for Communications.

Date: March 15-18, 2004.

Time: 7 p.m., March 15, 2004, to 5 p.m., March 18, 2004.

Agenda: To review and evaluate grant applications.

Place: Wyndham Garden Hotel-Durham/ RTP, 4620 S Miami Blvd., Durham, NC 27703.

Contact Person: Leroy Worth, PhD, Scientific Review Administrator, Scientific Review Branch, Division of Extramural Research and Training, Nat. Institute of Environmental Health Sciences, P.O. Box 12233, MD EC-30/Room 3171, Research Triangle Park, NC 27709, (919) 541-0670, worth@niehs.nih.gov.

(Catalogue of Federal Domestic Assistance Program Nos. 99.115, Biometry and Risk Estimation—Health Risks from Environmental Exposures; 93.142, NIEHS Hazardous Waste Worker Health and Safety Training; 93.143, NIEHS Superfund Hazardous Substances—Basic Research and Education; 93.894, Resources and Manpower Development in the Environmental Health Sciences; 93.113, Biological Response to Environmental Health Hazards; 93.114, Applied Toxicological Research and Testing, National Institutes of Health, HHS)

Dated: February 19, 2004.

LaVerne Y. Stringfield,

Director, Office of Federal Advisory Committee Policy.

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DEPARTMENT OF HOMELAND SECURITY

Bureau of Citizenship and Immigration Services

[CIS No. 2308-03]

Information Regarding the H-1B Numerical Limitation for Fiscal Year 2004

AGENCY: Bureau of Citizenship and Immigration Services, Department of Homeland Security.

ACTION: Notice.

SUMMARY: This notice explains how the Department of Homeland Security (DHS), Bureau of Citizenship and Immigration Services (CIS) will process H-1B petitions for new employment for the remainder of Fiscal Year (FY) 2004 now that it is clear that the demand for H-1B workers will exceed the statutory numerical limit (the cap) for H-1B petitions for FY 2004. This notice is published so that the public will understand the procedure for processing H-1B petitions now that the cap is reached, as this procedure may affect the hiring decisions of some prospective H-1B petitioners. These procedures are intended to minimize confusion and burden to employers who use the H-1B program.

DATES: This notice is effective February 25, 2004.

FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT: Kevin J. Cummings, Business and Trade Services Branch/Program and Regulation Development, Bureau of Citizenship and Immigration Services, Department of Homeland Security, 425 I Street, NW., ULLB 3rd Floor, Washington, DC 20536, telephone (202) 305-3175.

SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION:

Who Is an H-1B Nonimmigrant?

An H-1B nonimmigrant is an alien employed in a specialty occupation or as a fashion model of distinguished merit and ability. A specialty occupation is an occupation that requires theoretical and practical application of a body of specialized knowledge and attainment of a bachelor's or higher degree in the specific specialty as a minimum for admission into the United States.

What Is the Cap or Numerical Limitation on the H-1B Nonimmigrant Classification?

Section 214(g) of the Immigration and Nationality Act (Act) provides that the total number of aliens who may be issued H-1B visas or otherwise granted H-1B status during FY 2004 may not exceed 65,000. In accordance with the Free Trade Agreements (FTA) for Chile and Singapore, as approved by Congress in Public Laws 108-77 and 108-78, respectively, a total of 1,400 of the 65,000 H-1B numbers are reserved for H-1B1 nonimmigrants from Chile and 5,400 of the 65,000 numbers are reserved for H-1B1 nonimmigrants from Singapore. This effectively reduces the overall number of H-1B numbers that may be used prior to September 30, 2004, to 58,200. Under the FTA legislation, however, any unused H-1B1 numbers set aside for aliens from Chile and Singapore will be made available between October 1, 2004, and November 15, 2004. There now appears to be a sufficient number of H-1B petitions pending at the CIS Service Centers to reach the adjusted cap for FY 2004. Therefore, as of February 18, 2004, and until April 1, 2004, the CIS will return any petitions requesting an employment start date prior to October 1, 2004.

What Is the Effect of This Notice?

This notice explains the CIS procedure for processing H-1B petitions for new employment, which are subject to the H-1B cap, and filed by employers seeking to employ H-1B aliens on or before September 30, 2004.

Does This Procedure Apply to All H-1B Petitions Filed for FY 2004?

No. The procedure described in this notice relates only to H-1B petitions filed for beneficiaries who are subject to the numerical limitations and will be engaged in "new employment," to commence on or before September 30, 2004. A petition for new employment includes a petition where the alien beneficiary is outside the United States when the H-1B petition is approved or where the alien is already in the United States in another status and is seeking

H-1B status, either through a change of nonimmigrant status from within the United States or a notice to the Consulate of the eligibility for the new status.

Petitions for beneficiaries exempt from the H-1B numerical limitations, amended petitions, and petitions for extension of stay are not affected by this procedure because these petitions do not count against the cap. Likewise, petitions for aliens in the United States who already hold H-1B status, *i.e.*, petitions filed on behalf of an H-1B alien by a new or additional employer, are also not affected by this procedure. This procedure does not relate to petitions filed before October 1, 2004, for employment to commence on or after October 1, 2004.

What Is the CIS Procedure for Processing H-1B Petitions for New Employment During the Remainder of FY 2004?

This notice informs the public that there are a sufficient number of H-1B petitions pending at CIS Service Centers to reach the cap of 58,200 for FY 2004. As of February 18, 2004, the CIS will not accept for adjudication any H-1B petition for new employment containing a request for a work start date prior to October 1, 2004. Petitions filed after February 17, 2004, will be returned (along with the filing fee and, if applicable, the premium processing fee) to the petitioner according to 8 CFR 214.2(h)(8)(ii)(E). In accordance with existing regulations, such petitioners may refile those petitions with a new starting date of October 1, 2004, or later.

CIS has established how many H-1B petitions are pending and will likely count towards the FY2004 statutory limit. CIS will adjudicate all petitions in the pipeline. CIS will adjudicate cases in the order in which they are received. CIS is not suspending premium processing and normal rules applicable to those cases still apply.

How Should a Petitioner Notify CIS That It Wishes To Withdraw a Petition?

If a petitioner wishes to withdraw a pending H-1B petition or an approved H-1B petition for new employment, the petitioner should send a withdrawal request to the CIS Service Center where the petition is pending or was filed and approved. The request should be signed by the petitioner or an authorized representative and include the filing receipt number and the names of both the petitioner and beneficiary.