



DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH & HUMAN SERVICES

Public Health Service

Food and Drug Administration
Rockville MD 20857

July 25, 2006

Patrick J. McConnon, MPH
Executive Director
Council of State and Territorial Epidemiologists
2872 Woodcock Boulevard, Suite 303
Atlanta, Georgia 30341

RECEIVED JUL 31 2006

Dear Mr. McConnon:

Thank you for providing the Food and Drug Administration (FDA) with a copy of the Council of State and Territorial Epidemiologists' (CSTE) position statement 06-ED-03 entitled, "Guidelines for U.S.-Mexico Coordination on Epidemiologic Events of Mutual Interest."

I understand that the Office of the Secretary, Department of Health and Human Services (DHHS), plans to coordinate a review process for this document and FDA and other DHHS agencies will be asked to provide comments through that process. Therefore, FDA will comment on the CSTE document through the DHHS process, rather than directly to you.

We appreciate your organization's work on the Guidelines for U.S.-Mexico Coordination on Epidemiologic Events of Mutual Interest.

Sincerely,

Andrew C. von Eschenbach, M.D.
Acting Commissioner of Food and Drugs

RECEIVED SEP 5 2006

U.S. Department of Homeland Security
Washington, DC 20528



Homeland
Security

August 25, 2006

Patrick J. McConnon, MPH
Executive Director
Council of State and Territorial Epidemiologists
2872 Woodcock Boulevard Ste 303
Atlanta, GA 30341-4015

Dear Mr. McConnon,

Thank you for the letter and recommendations. As the Chief Medical Officer for the Department of Homeland Security (DHS), one of my primary responsibilities is to serve as Secretary Chertoff's principal medical advisor. In this regard, the Office of the Chief Medical Officer (OCMO) has been working to ensure the Department has a unified approach to medical preparedness, as well as coordinating the Department's Federal, State, Local, and Tribal government biodefense activities. I am also responsible for providing real-time incident management guidance, so I share your sentiment regarding the critical importance of timely and accurate information for public health and medical response. My colleagues at the Department of Health and Human Services (HHS), Center for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), and Environmental Protection Agency (EPA), all are dedicating significant time and resources to the very issues your Council illustrated in its July 27, 2006 letter.

DHS is dedicated to improving information-sharing partnerships to enhance homeland security. There are several on-going initiatives that will increase the Federal government's ability to collate, integrate, and disseminate information to decision makers at all levels of government. One example is our interagency effort to establish the National Biosurveillance Integration System (NBIS); designed to integrate Federal and non-governmental human, animal, plant, and environmental biosurveillance activities to provide early recognition of emergent biohazard events of potential national significance. We realize timely response will be dependent on our ability to improve information sharing and enhance situational awareness with our State, Local, and Tribal partners.

Your letter's *desired actions to be taken*, highlight a few of the very complicated, yet critically important issues that are being addressed by DHS.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read "Jeffrey W. Runge".

Jeffrey W. Runge, MD, FACEP
Chief Medical Officer
Department of Homeland Security