



UNITED STATES ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION AGENCY
WASHINGTON, D.C. 20460

DEC 7 2001

OFFICE OF
PREVENTION, PESTICIDES AND
TOXIC SUBSTANCES

Matthew Cartter, MD, MPH
President
Council of State and Territorial Epidemiologists
2872 Woodcock Boulevard, Suite 303
Atlanta, GA 30341-4015

Dear Dr. Cartter:

Thank you for your letter of July 20, 2001, to Christine Todd Whitman, Administrator of the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA), urging increased Federal support for research on combating West Nile Virus. Administrator Whitman asked that EPA's Office of Prevention, Pesticides and Toxic Substances (OPPTS) respond to you directly because we are responsible for regulating the use of pesticides in the United States, and have the lead responsibility within EPA for dealing with West Nile Virus (WNV) issues.

Your letter enclosed a resolution from the Council of State and Territorial Epidemiologists (CSTE) which asks a number of Federal agencies, including EPA, to increase funding for WNV-related research. EPA recognizes that WNV is a significant public health threat to our country, and the Agency is committed to supporting Federal, State and local efforts to achieve effective control of this disease. As a practical matter, we can not offer direct research support to outside entities of the kind you propose at the present time. We are, however, actively supporting the goals of the CSTE resolution in a number of ways.

Under the Food Quality Protection Act of 1996, EPA's pesticide program has a mandate to work with the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) to identify public health pest control needs and to give special consideration to registration or reregistration of pesticides that have such applications. In addition, we are in the process of reregistering older pesticides, including essentially all of the chemicals currently used for control of mosquito larvae and adults in public health vector control programs. This reregistration process includes a detailed evaluation of both the human health and environmental risks potentially posed by the mosquito control application of these chemicals. If we find that additional toxicity or environmental fate data is needed in order to evaluate the risks posed by a pesticide, we can require the registrants to submit such data. In short, we believe that the CSTE goal of assessing the environmental impact and risks of vector control programs is substantially addressed in our existing pesticide regulatory program.

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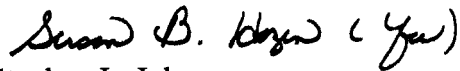
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Research on vector control strategies, program efficacy and improvement at the Federal level is conducted primarily by CDC, the National Institutes of Health, and also by the Department of Defense. (We note that the Department of Defense was not among the agencies listed in the CSTE resolution. You may wish to include the Defense Department as a future contact by writing to Lt. Col. Richard N. Johnson, Research Liaison Officer, Armed Forces Pest Management Board, Forest Glen Section/WRAMC, Washington DC, 20307-5001). EPA has, however, played an active role in bringing together these agencies, as well as USDA agencies involved in pest control research, to discuss the outlook for research and development of new strategies for vector control. Our Agency sponsored such a meeting in July of this year. Among other things, we explored the role EPA could play in encouraging the development of new technologies for mosquito control.

Finally, we appreciate the offer to work with your organization on WNV issues. The designated Public Health Official in our Office of Pesticide Programs who acts as our primary liaison to public health agencies and organizations is Mr. Arnold Layne. Please feel free to contact Mr. Layne at 703-305-7448, or by mail at the US Environmental Protection Agency, Office of Pesticide Programs (7505C), 1200 Pennsylvania Avenue NW, Washington, DC 20460.

Again, thank you for your letter. I hope the information provided is helpful

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Stephen L. Johnson (Yes)".

Stephen L. Johnson
Assistant Administrator

cc: Arnold Layne



DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH & HUMAN SERVICES

Public Health Service

National Institutes of Health
Bethesda, MD 20892

Division of Microbiology and Infectious Diseases
National Institute of Allergy and Infectious Diseases
6700-B Rockledge Drive
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August 16, 2001

Matthew Cartter, M.D., M.P.H.
President
Council of State and Territorial Epidemiologists
2872 Woodcock Boulevard, Suite 303
Atlanta, GA 30341-4015

Dear Dr. Cartter:

I am responding to your July 20 letter to NIH Director Dr. Ruth Kirschstein regarding your organization's recent position statement concerning federal funding support for West Nile virus and, in particular, your desire for the NIH to become involved in such efforts. Because the National Institute of Allergy and Infectious Diseases (NIAID), one of the Institutes that comprise the NIH, spearheads the agency's research on this virus, your letter was referred to my office for reply.

We would be delighted to collaborate with CSTE and others on issues related to West Nile. The NIAID already partners with the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) and other organizations on a host of federally-supported West Nile activities. In fact, we coordinate our West Nile research portfolio with the CDC and interact with our counterparts there on a regular basis.

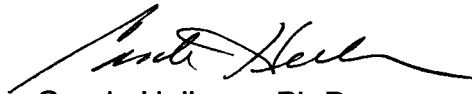
In that regard, I would also like to correct what appears to be a misperception that the NIH does not support West Nile research activities. The NIAID actively supports a number of West Nile research efforts, which are summarized in the attached document. As you know, the NIH mission is to uncover new knowledge that will lead to better health for everyone. The NIH works toward that mission by: conducting research in its own laboratories; supporting the research of non-Federal scientists in universities, medical schools, hospitals, and research institutions throughout the country and abroad; helping in the training of research investigators; and fostering communication of medical and health sciences information. To this end, West Nile is a high priority research area for the NIH and I can assure you that related proposals submitted for grant or contract support are given every consideration. If you are interested in learning more about NIH's funding support process, you may want to visit the following website: <http://grants.nih.gov/grants/index.cfm>

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Dr. James Meegan is NIAID's Program Officer responsible for West Nile activities and he would be pleased to work with CSTE; he can be reached on (301) 496-7453 or by e-mail at jm75v@nih.gov. We look forward to working with you, and Jim will expect to hear from you soon.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Carole Heilman", with a long, sweeping horizontal line extending to the right.

Carole Heilman, Ph.D.
Director, Division of Microbiology
and Infectious Diseases
National Institute of Allergy and Infectious Diseases

Enclosure

cc: Dr. James Meegan

NIH West Nile Virus Research Activities -- 2001

The NIH is spending approximately \$8 million annually for grants to scientific centers for programs studying West Nile and related viruses. Research is underway to develop a vaccine, antiviral medicines and new diagnostic assays. Additionally, basic research programs are studying the virus itself, the disease in humans and animals, and maintenance of the virus in nature. Knowledge of these principles is essential in planning strategies to prevent, treat, and eventually control this disease.

In brief, these areas of research include:

- **Research to prevent and control spread of the disease.** Since we do not now know the eventual public health impact of West Nile, it is considered prudent to start developmental research on a vaccine for humans. The NIH recently funded studies to explore the possibility of producing a vaccine against West Nile. Initial results with this research, which uses the existing yellow fever vaccine (also a related flavivirus) as a vectoring backbone to deliver West Nile virus antigens, have been very encouraging.
- **Research to treat the disease with antiviral drugs.** The NIH has funded investigators to establish a system to screen chemical compounds for possible antiviral activity against West Nile virus. Any promising antiviral drug candidates will be tested in a newly developed animal model system to evaluate safety and efficacy before moving on to possible human trials.
- **Research to improve rapid diagnosis.** This effort supports research to allow rapid detection of West Nile in samples from humans, other animals or vectoring mosquitoes. This research occurs mainly at small biotechnology companies who are attempting to develop new, commercially available diagnostic assays.
- **Research on the virus itself, on the disease in humans, and on its maintenance in nature.** Factors influencing the pattern of emergence and distribution of West Nile include those associated with the virus itself, the agent's hosts and vectors, and the environment in which agent and host interact. However, the specific factors contributing to emergence of West Nile are poorly understood. Nonetheless, knowledge of these principles is essential in planning strategies to prevent, treat, and control this disease. The overall objective of this basic research is to develop the knowledge and public health tools needed for the U.S. to combat West Nile.

NATIONAL SCIENCE FOUNDATION

4201 WILSON BOULEVARD
ARLINGTON, VIRGINIA 22230

October 16, 2001



OFFICE OF THE
DIRECTOR

Dr. Matthew Cartter
President
Council of State and Territorial Epidemiologists
2872 Woodcock Boulevard, Suite 303
Atlanta, Georgia 30341-4015

Dear Dr. Cartter:

Thank you for your letter of July 20, 2001, and for the copy of the Joint Position statement issued by the Council of State and Territorial Epidemiologists. As you probably know, the National Science Foundation primarily supports scientific and engineering research and related educational activities at colleges, universities and other institutions. As part of this broad mission, NSF supports basic research on various issues related to the biology of the earth's biodiversity. This research is supported using open competition and a peer review process.

NSF does not normally support research with disease-related goals, including work on the etiology, diagnosis or treatment of physical or mental disease, abnormality, or malfunction in human beings or animals. Animal models of such conditions or the development or testing of drugs or other procedures for their treatment also are not eligible for support.

I wish you success in achieving the goals outlined by your organization in the position statement.

Sincerely,

Rita R. Colwell
Director

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United States
Department of
Agriculture

Marketing and
Regulatory
Programs

Animal and
Plant Health
Inspection
Service

Washington, DC
20250

August 31, 2001

Dr. Matthew Cartter
President
Council of State and
Territorial Epidemiologists
Suite 303
2872 Woodstock Boulevard
Atlanta, Georgia 30341-4015

Dear Dr. Cartter:

Thank you for your letter of July 20, 2001, to Secretary Veneman regarding a position statement about West Nile virus (WNV) passed by the Council of State and Territorial Epidemiologists in June 2001.

We appreciate your concerns about this disease and understand your wish to have the cooperation and support of our Agency for surveillance, research, and control activities. I assure you that our Agency of the U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) is committed to working cooperatively with our State partners to monitor and help control the spread of WNV. In this regard, we recognize your request for our Agency to develop a WNV grant program to help fund State agricultural agencies, veterinary diagnostic laboratories, zoologic institutions, and universities; however, I must explain that our Agency is already conducting many of the activities for which you would like us to provide grants. We believe the limited funds we have for WNV would be used most wisely within our Agency programs, which already have the necessary infrastructure and field support.

In fiscal year (FY) 2001, our Agency was authorized to use \$400,000 from our emergency contingency fund to pay for WNV surveillance efforts, laboratory testing, and related studies. The money was divided equally between our Veterinary Services and Wildlife Services programs. These two programs are cooperating with the lead Federal agency in the WNV effort—the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services' Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC)—as well as State and local authorities throughout the South and East. Among other things, we are assisting with surveillance of wild bird populations, providing diagnostic testing services, and augmenting efforts to find cases of equine encephalitis. The surveillance data we have collected is being used to further develop national public health strategies for WNV surveillance, control, and prevention.

As you know, one of our Agency's main goals is to protect animal health. Our Center for Veterinary Biologics has granted a conditional license for a WNV vaccine for equines. Although the vaccine has not yet been proven fully efficacious under field conditions, it is a major step in protecting horses against WNV.



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In New York, we have established a dead bird surveillance hotline, which is helping to predict where the WNV threat to humans is highest. In Alabama, New Hampshire, and Vermont, we have worked closely with State and county health departments to collect dead birds and coordinate dead bird testing. In fact, at the request of the Alabama Department of Health, our Wildlife Services program is coordinating the entire cooperative WNV effort in Alabama. We are also conducting a pilot study to determine the role that birds living in close association to people may play in the spread of the disease. In addition, we are cooperating with the U.S. Department of the Interior's U.S. Geological Survey, whose National Wildlife Health Center is coordinating a migratory bird study along the Atlantic Coast. Our Agency's National Wildlife Research Center has submitted a grant proposal to the CDC to study bird-to-bird transmission and fecal-to-bird transmission of WNV.

As I mention above, all of the funding that our Agency has been authorized to spend for WNV activities has come through our emergency contingency fund. However, we have established an internal WNV management team to coordinate our response to the disease if we receive any appropriated dollars. If you have any further questions or suggestions, you may wish to contact Dr. Randall Crom, a leader on the WNV team. His address is Veterinary Services, Animal and Plant Health Inspection Service, USDA, Unit 41, 4700 River Road, Riverdale, Maryland 20737. His telephone number is (301) 734-8073.

In the meantime, our Agency is committed to providing support and technical assistance to our Federal, State, and local cooperators. Working together, we will be able to increase our understanding the spread of WNV and then initiate management activities to mitigate the disease's impact on human and animal health.

In FY 2001, Congress provided funding to the USDA Agricultural Research Service (ARS) for WNV research. ARS scientists at the Center for Medical, Agricultural, and Veterinary Entomology (CMAVE), Gainesville, Florida, are developing new trapping systems for the detection, population monitoring, and control of mosquito vectors of WNV as well as new biologically-based (mosquito baculovirus) control technology. Both technologies are currently being tested in New York, Connecticut, and Florida. In addition, CMAVE scientists possess world-class expertise in the development and use of mosquito repellents and personal protection technology.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'C. Reed' with a stylized flourish at the end.

Craig A. Reed
Administrator