



UNITED STATES ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION AGENCY
NATIONAL HEALTH AND ENVIRONMENTAL EFFECTS
RESEARCH LABORATORY
RESEARCH TRIANGLE PARK, NC 27711

OFFICE OF
RESEARCH AND DEVELOPMENT

February 27, 2012

Betty Mekdeci
Executive Director
Birth Defects Research for Children
976 Lake Baldwin Lane, Suite 104
Orlando, FL 32814

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Dear Ms. Mekdeci,

Thank you for your correspondence and for the work done by your organization on behalf of the health of children. As you know, the Environmental Protection Agency has been on the forefront of dioxin research and regulation for many years. We are pleased to have been able to finalize and release the updated non-cancer science assessment for dioxins. As a result of our past efforts, dioxin emissions in the United States have been reduced by over 90%. Yet, we understand that the effects of exposures in the past, including exposures of Vietnam veterans, are still of great concern. Your birth defects registry is the type of effort needed to make linkages between environmental exposures and birth defects. Causality is difficult to prove in epidemiological studies, so the larger and better defined the population being studied, the stronger the case will be. I encourage you to publish findings from your studies in the open scientific literature, where it will have the greatest impact.

We are also beginning to understand that the range of possible effects of exposures during pregnancy or early childhood goes far beyond structural birth defects and includes functional, physiological, and other effects that may not manifest until later in life. The EPA supports an active research program in this area through the EPA/NIEHS Children's Environmental Health and Disease Prevention Research Centers (www.epa.gov/ncer/childrenscenters/) as well as in our intramural research programs. Protecting the health of our children will always be a priority for us.

Again, I applaud the hard work you and your organization do every day to protect and improve the lives of our children. We certainly share your passion for that. Best wishes for continued success in your efforts.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "H. Zenick".

Harold Zenick, Ph.D.
Director

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