

MEMORANDUM

March 25, 2005

TO: All NIH Staff

FROM: Deputy Director and Deputy Ethics Counselor, NIH

SUBJECT: Conflict of Interest Rules--Comment Period Deadline Reminder

As part of on-going efforts to inform NIH staff about changes in our ethics program, I want to be sure that each employee knows that the comment period for the new conflict of interest rules will close on APRIL 4, 2005. As stated, in part, in the beginning of the conflict of interest regulations: "...This is an interim rule. The Department of Health and Human Services (HHS) intends to evaluate certain provisions in the rule, particularly on outside activities and financial holdings, within the next year. During this time, HHS also will: evaluate possible effects on hiring and retention that may result from the imposition of outside activity and financial holdings prohibitions...."

There are employees who may be affected and who do not have regular access to computers. I have asked the Deputy Ethics Counselors (DECs) in the Institutes and Centers to double-check to make sure that all employees know about this opportunity to comment.

For those who have comments and concerns, especially about areas of undue hardship, your comments need to be posted to ETHICS@HHS.GOV. It is the only site that is accepting official comments about the interim final rules. YOUR COMMENTS WILL ONLY BE CONSIDERED IF YOUR E-MAIL INCLUDES IN THE SUBJECT LINE THE WORDS: "Comments on Interim Final HHS Supplemental Ethics Rule." Please be aware that the comments may be accessible to the public. Questions about individual circumstances should be addressed to your Deputy Ethics Counselor.

The list of DECs is available at: <http://ethics.od.nih.gov/decs.htm>. For additional information about conflict of interest and the complete regulation, see: http://www.nih.gov/about/ethics_COI.htm.

Thank you for your help in disseminating this important information.

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