

14 May 2007

Dr. Kristina Thayer
National Institute of Environmental Health Sciences
MD B2-08
P.O. Box 12233
Research Triangle Park, NC 27709

Comment on the April 26, 2007 Report of the NIEHS Review Panel on the Centers for Children's Environmental Health and Disease Prevention Research Program

Dear Dr. Thayer,

We would like to comment on the Report of the NIEHS Review Panel on the Centers for Children's Environmental Health and Disease Prevention Research Panel. We have been associated with the University of Washington's Child Environmental Health Center (UWCEHC) for the past eight years. Although we have served as the Community-Based Participatory Research Project of the UWCEHC, we believe our work has greatly increased both basic science research and translational research related to pesticide exposure. We take issue with the NIEHS Review Panel's conclusions and summary.

From the outset of our project, we involved the community in every decision we made about the project. Their decisions verify that working with communities leads to robust and rigorous science. Among the things our Community Advisory Board (CAB) recommended was that we collect vehicle dust to more closely identify how pesticide residues were carried into the home. This addition to our project added greatly to our understanding of the take-home pathway, where we found that pesticide residues in house dust and vehicle dust were strongly correlated. This is an example of how the scope of our project changed as a result of community participation.

The community-based participatory project combines principles of community-engagement research with innovative scientific research that addresses biological mechanisms for toxicity. The project has collected a variety of biomedical samples, including urine voids, venous and fingerstick blood, buccal cells, and saliva. All samples are being analyzed for the presence of pesticides, and the result will provide important information about methods of detecting the presence of pesticides in adults and children. Additional analysis of this cohort to detect the presence of genetic polymorphisms that influence the rate of pesticide metabolism is planned, as is analysis to detect early cellular changes in children that may be attributable to pesticide exposures. The work of this project is truly translational and cross-disciplinary, drawing methods from community research as well as biological sciences.

Because of our work with the UWCEHC, we have been able to leverage additional dollars to do the type of basic science research you recommend. This would not have happened without the umbrella of the Center for Child Environmental Health. Much of this work is being done at the Centers for Disease Control, where Dr. Dana Barr heads probably the most prestigious laboratory in the country when it comes to understanding pesticide exposure. Our extra funds are being used to analyze numerous biomarkers which we were fortunate to collect during the Community-Based Participatory Research

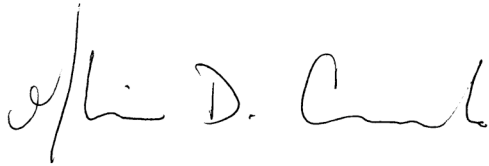
project. A subsequent donation has made it possible for us to go back to the population and inform them of their results and educate them in pesticide avoidance and control.

Our work with cholinesterase inhibition has piggybacked on to a State of Washington effort to test farmworkers engaged in pesticide-producing tasks. We have been able to assess equipment and methodology in obtaining blood samples from field workers, who are often omitted in this kind of test. This work would not have been possible without the UWCEHC.

In summary, the work we have done with the UWCEHC has been extremely productive in many spheres ranging from basic science to translational research. It has been transdisciplinary and included all facets of science. Our publications are among the most cited in the field of pesticide exposure. We believe the Review Panel's Report does not take into account all the many contributions made by the Children's Environmental Health Centers. We urge you to reconsider your recommendations.

Sincerely,

Beti Thompson, Ph.D.
Principal Investigator, Community-Based Participatory Research Project, UWCEHC

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Gloria D. Coronado". The signature is written in a cursive style with a large initial "G" and "C".

Gloria Coronado, Ph.D.
Co-Investigator, Community-Based Participatory Research Project, UWCEHC