



Centers for Disease Control
and Prevention (CDC)
Atlanta, GA 30333

March 17, 2007

Patrick Edward Preston, Trial Attorney
Office of Chief Counsel
Federal Emergency Management Agency
US Department of Homeland Security
500 C Street, SW
Washington, DC 20472

Dear Mr. Preston:

I am writing in follow-up to my previous correspondence last month on behalf of the CDC National Center for Environmental Health/Agency for Toxic Substances and Disease Registry.

It has just come to my attention that the Health Consultation "Formaldehyde Sampling at FEMA Temporary Housing Units" has been completed without a policy review by our senior technical staff. I am concerned that this health consultation is incomplete and perhaps misleading.

Formaldehyde is classified as "reasonably anticipated to be a human carcinogen. As such, there is no recognized "safe level" of exposure. Thus, any level of exposure to formaldehyde may pose a cancer risk, regardless of duration. Failure to communicate this issue is possibly misleading, and a threat to public health. I had discussed this issue several months ago in a review of the public statement derived from Toxicological Profile that FEMA proposed. I specified at that time that this statement contained no mention of the cancer risk and that should be a public health concern.

Thank you for your consideration of this issue and please feel free to contact me. Failure to speak to the long-term cancer risk regarding formaldehyde exposure irrespective of duration is of particular concern.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "M. Keim, MD".

Mark Keim, MD
Associate Director
Office of Terrorism Preparedness and
Emergency Response
National Centers for Environmental Health/
Agency for Toxic Substances and Disease Registry

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CC: Christopher T. De Rosa, M.S., Ph.D.
Director, Division of Toxicology and Environmental Medicine
Agency for Toxic Substances and Disease Registry

Howard Frumkin, MD, PhD
Director,
National Center for Environmental Health/
Agency for Toxic Substances and Disease Registry