

**NSABB Public Consultation on Guidance for Enhancing  
Personnel Reliability and Strengthening the Culture of  
Responsibility at the Local Level**

January 5, 2011  
8:30 am-6:00 pm

Hyatt Regency Bethesda  
1 Bethesda Metro Center  
Bethesda, Maryland

**8:30 am**      **Welcome and opening remarks**

*Stanley Lemon, M.D.*

NSABB Member and Professor, Department of Medicine, University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill

**8:45 am**

**Panel I – Engaged institutional leadership: Promoting biosecurity, personnel reliability, and a culture of responsibility**

Moderators:

*Joseph Kanabrocki, Ph.D., C.B.S.P.*

NSABB Member and Assistant Dean for Biosafety and Associate Professor of Microbiology, University of Chicago

*Stanley Lemon, M.D.*

Background: During the NSABB’s deliberations and consultations, the concept of engaged institutional leadership was noted repeatedly as being critically important to ensuring personnel reliability. The concept of leadership that values security; fosters a sense of vigilance and responsibility among personnel; and encourages teamwork, camaraderie, and close personal working relationships was mentioned consistently as one of the most effective and feasible ways to enhance personnel reliability. Indeed, it was suggested that engaged leadership and teamwork may be more effective than the formal assessments conducted under some comprehensive personnel reliability programs. One suggestion has been that there should be “institutional champions” for promoting biosecurity, personnel reliability, and a culture of responsibility. This panel will explore best practices in these regards.

Discussion Questions: (for panelists and then plenary discussion)

- What are specific ways that institutional leaders can convey their commitment to these concepts and foster “buy-in” by all employees at all levels?
- Who should be the institutional champions of biosecurity, personnel reliability, and culture of responsibility?
- Are there specific ways to incentivize laboratory leadership to promote a culture of responsibility among lab personnel?
- Are there any lessons to be learned from other arenas? For example, does your institution have “institutional champions” in other areas? What role do they play and what strategies do they utilize?

Panelists

- Institutional leadership perspective  
*Richard B. Marchese, Ph.D.*  
Vice President for Research and Economic Development  
University of Alabama at Birmingham  
  
*Stanley Maloy, Ph.D.*  
Professor and Dean, College of Sciences  
San Diego State University
- Investigator perspective  
*Ronald Atlas, Ph.D.*  
Professor of Art and Sciences Biology  
University of Louisville
- Biosafety professional perspective  
*Bruce Whitney, Ph.D.*  
Associate Vice President for Research Compliance, Responsible Official, and  
Biological Safety Officer, Texas A&M University

**9:15 am**      **Discussion of Panel I questions (open to all attendees)**

**10:15 am**      **Break**

**10:30 am**      **Panel II - Encouraging biosecurity awareness and promoting responsible conduct in the laboratory through communication, lab rapport, and a strong sense of team**

Moderators:

*Murray Cohen, Ph.D., M.P.H., C.I.H.*  
NSABB Member  
President and Chair, Frontline Healthcare Workers® Safety Foundation, Ltd.

*Janet Nicholson, Ph.D.*

NSABB Member ex officio and Senior Advisor for Laboratory Science, Office of Infectious Diseases, Centers for Disease Control and Prevention

Background: The NSABB has heard previously from the scientific community that one way to enhance the culture of responsibility is by building a strong sense of team within laboratories that work with select agents and toxins. Responsible Officials (ROs) and principal investigators (PIs) play a critically important role in setting an appropriate tone regarding biosecurity and personnel reliability and in creating an environment that is conducive to communication. These leaders should work to build and foster strong working relationships with lab staff. This will not only help to build a sense of trust and responsibility that will foster peer-reporting, but it will also help the RO and PI in being able to recognize concerning behavioral changes that may presage a reliability or biosecurity problem. The importance of ROs and PIs being engaged in the work that is conducted and attuned to personnel was a recurring theme in NSABB discussions as being one of the most effective personnel reliability measures. This panel will focus on strategies for encouraging biosecurity awareness and promoting responsible conduct among laboratory personnel by enhancing communication and building strong lab rapport and sense of team.

Discussion questions: (for panelists and then plenary discussion)

- What practices will help lab leaders to foster: vigilance regarding personnel reliability and biosecurity among their lab staff; understanding that such vigilance is the responsibility of all personnel; and an environment in which personnel are comfortable in reporting concerns?
- How can lab leaders build and foster strong working relationships with and among lab personnel?
- How can lab leaders convey the importance of and their commitment to biosecurity and personnel reliability?
- What are strategies for making the consideration of biosecurity, dual use research, and responsible conduct of research a routine part of daily life in the lab?

Panelists

- Investigator perspective

*Jean Patterson, Ph.D.*

Chair, Department of Virology and Immunology  
Southwest Foundation for Biomedical Research

*Theresa Koehler, Ph.D.*

Microbiology and Molecular Genetics, Herbert L. and Margaret W. DuPont  
Professorship in Biomedical Science  
University of Texas Health Science Center at Houston

- Postdoctoral research perspective

*Jenni Weeks, Ph.D.*

St. Jude Children's Research Hospital

- Biosafety Professional/Responsible Official perspective  
*William Mellon, Ph.D.*  
Professor of Pharmaceutical Sciences and Associate Dean for Research Policy  
University of Wisconsin

*Deborah Wilson, Dr.P.H., C.B.S.P.*  
Director, Division of Occupational Health and Safety  
National Institutes of Health

**11:00 am Discussion of Panel II topics (open to all attendees)**

**12:00 am Lunch**

**1:00 pm Panel III - Peer reporting of concerning behaviors**

Moderators:

*Michael Imperiale, Ph.D.*  
NSABB Member and Professor, Department of Microbiology and Immunology  
University of Michigan Medical School

*Dennis Dixon, Ph.D.*  
NSABB ex officio designee and Chief, Bacteriology and Mycology Branch  
National Institute of Allergy and Infectious Disease, National Institutes of Health

Background: All individuals in a research environment that includes pathogens should be aware of surrounding activities and understand that it is their individual and collective responsibility to report if a colleague appears to be behaving in ways that are inappropriate for work with pathogens. This awareness and understanding is important to maintaining a culture of research responsibility and should be used to encourage peer-reporting in good faith. It will be important to dispel any notion that peer-reporting is “snitching” about one’s colleagues or constitutes an otherwise inappropriate or negative activity. This can and should be addressed through training of personnel about their responsibilities in this regard, what should be reported and to whom, and what protections are in place for the reporter and the subject of the report. There should be procedures and policies in place that protect against frivolous or retaliatory reporting, maintain confidentiality and privacy to the extent possible, protect against retaliation, and address reporting on more senior scientists or supervisors. This panel will discuss relevant concerning behaviors and practices for reporting and addressing them.

Discussion questions: (for panelists and then plenary discussion)

- What types of behaviors or behavioral changes should raise red flags in terms of reliability or biosecurity?
- To whom should concerns be reported?

- What protections should be in place for the reporter? For the subject of the report?
- How can frivolous or retaliatory reporting be discouraged?
- How and to what extent can privacy and confidentiality be maintained?
- How can institutions dispel any stigma associated with reporting concerning behaviors?
- What legal implications should an employer consider in implementing a peer-reporting program?
- What are the best ways to protect the rights of a person who is reporting the concerning behavior of a supervisor or other superior?
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Panelists:

- Biosafety professional/ Responsible Official perspective  
*William Gaylord, III*  
 Director, R&D Environmental Health and Safety and Responsible Official  
 Allergan Sales, LLC  
  
*Paul Kimsey, Ph.D.*  
 Deputy Director and Responsible Official  
 California State Public Health Laboratory
- Investigator perspective  
*Theodora Ross, M.D., Ph.D.*  
 Comprehensive Cancer Center Hematology  
 University of Michigan  
  
*Thomas Pistole, Ph.D.*  
 Professor of Microbiology  
 University of New Hampshire
- Postdoctoral researcher perspective  
*Jenni Weeks, Ph.D.*  
 St. Jude Children's Research Hospital
- Legal perspective  
*Stephanie Quincy, J.D.*  
 Partner, Steptoe & Johnson LLC, Phoenix, AZ

**1:30 pm      Discussion of Panel III questions (open to all attendees)**

**2:30 pm      Break**

2:45 pm

**Panel IV – Addressing impediments to disclosure of negative information about job candidates**

Moderators:

*J. Patrick Fitch, Ph.D.*

NSABB Member and Director, National Biodefense Analysis and Countermeasures Center  
President, Battelle National Biodefense Institute, LLC

*Susan Ehrlich, J.D., LL.M.*

NSABB Member and Judge (Retired), Arizona Court of Appeals

Background:

In previous discussions regarding personnel reliability, the NSABB heard anecdotes indicating that the fear of being sued is a barrier to providing potential employers with a full and candid review of an employee's past performance. This panel will discuss this issue and strategies for addressing it.

Discussion questions: (for panelists and then plenary discussion)

- What are the potential liabilities of passing on accurate but derogatory information?
- What types of derogatory or negative information can and cannot be passed on to a potential employer? Are there exceptions to certain types of information?
- What are the potential consequences and liabilities of not providing a full and accurate account of an employee's past performance? Is there an affirmative duty to disclose information about an employee's past performance?
- What are some strategies to alleviate the general reluctance to provide candid references due to fear of a lawsuit?

Panelists:

- Human Resources perspective  
*Karen Silverberg*  
Assoc. Dean, Appointments, Promotions and Tenure  
Duke University School of Medicine
- Legal perspective  
*Stephanie Quincy, J.D.*  
Partner, Steptoe & Johnson LLC, Phoenix, AZ
- Investigator perspective  
*Samuel Miller, M.D.*  
Professor of Medicine and Microbiology  
Principle Investigator, Northwest Regional Center of Excellence for Biodefense and Emerging Infectious Diseases Research, University of Washington

*Olaf Schneewind, M.D., Ph.D.*

Director, Great Lakes Regional Center of Excellence for Biodefense and Emerging Infectious Diseases, University of Chicago

**3:30 pm**      **Discussion of Panel IV topics (open to all attendees)**

**4:30 pm**

**Panel V- Assessment of effectiveness and impact of practices for strengthening personnel reliability and culture of responsibility**

Moderators:

*Randall Murch, Ph.D.*

NSABB Member and Associate Director, Research Program Development  
Virginia Tech – Northern University

*Laura Kwinn, Ph.D.*

NSABB ex officio designee and Science Policy Advisor, Office of the Assistant Secretary for Preparedness and Response Department of Health and Human Services

Background: The goal of implementing personnel reliability measures is to enhance security and safeguard public trust. Because of the impact these measures can have on day-to-day research, it is important to assess the effectiveness and impact of any measure being implemented. Although important, assessing the effectiveness and impact of these measures is challenging because gauging “success,” e.g., prevention of an insider threat, may be impossible. This panel aims to identify strategies, methods, and possible metrics for determining the effectiveness of measures aimed at enhancing personnel reliability at the local level.

Discussion questions: (for panelists and then plenary discussion)

- How can we evaluate the effectiveness and impacts of practices aimed at enhancing personnel reliability and the culture of responsibility?
- Are there lessons learned from other arenas that have had similar challenges?

Panelists:

- Evaluation expert perspective  
*Susan Cozzens, Ph.D.*  
Associate Dean for Research Ivan Allen College  
Georgia Tech
- Scientific Community Perspective  
*Mark Frankel, Ph.D.*  
Director, Scientific Freedom, Responsibility and Law Program  
American Association for the Advancement of Science

- Biosafety professional perspective  
*Janet Peterson, RBP, CBSP*  
Biosafety Officer and Assistant Director, Department of Environmental Safety  
University of Maryland

**5:15 pm**      **Discussion of Panel V topics (open to all attendees)**

**6:00 pm**      **Concluding remarks, meeting adjournment**