



**U.S. Department of Energy
Hanford Site**

AUG 24 2011

11-HAB-0044

Ms. S. L. Leckband, Chair
Hanford Advisory Board
Enviroissues Hanford Project Office
713 Jadwin, Suite 4
Richland, Washington 99352

Dear Ms. Leckband:

HANFORD ADVISORY BOARD (HAB) FEBRUARY 11, 2011, CONSENSUS ADVICE #241, "MEDICAL SUPPORT CONTRACTOR"

The U.S. Department of Energy (DOE) appreciates the HAB's continued commitment to worker health and safety and thank you for your Advice #241 letter (enclosed) regarding DOE's medical support contractor. We agree that the medical support contractor plays a vital role in providing medical services at the Hanford Site.

Advice Point #1: DOE should engage the senior leadership of all the contractors, including the medical support contractor, to clarify their relative roles, responsibilities, and authority with respect to the health of the employees. The contracts and agreements should recognize the lead role and responsibility of the site medical officer and medical contractor in making binding determinations required to be followed by contractors. The result of these discussions should include identification of leadership responsibilities on programs to reduce all key health risks. It should also review protocols on work restriction, medical removal, and confidentiality. The insights gained from these discussions would be useful as input to the upcoming Request for Proposal (RFP) for the medical support contract.

Response: The current Hanford Occupational Medicine Contractor has a Memorandum of Agreement with each of the Hanford Site contractors for whom it provides services. These Agreements describe each party's roles and responsibilities. DOE recognizes the advantages of delineating roles and responsibilities concerning delivery of services between contractors and has respected such an approach in developing the Draft Request for Proposals (RFP).

Advice Point #2: DOE should strongly encourage the medical contractor to be an active member of the Hanford Concerns Council, a DOE-supported resource for resolving significant contractor employee concerns and issues, many of which are related to employee health.

Response: The Hanford Concerns Council is an independent organization. While DOE supports the Hanford Concerns Council and other forms of alternative dispute resolution to resolve employee concerns, participation in the Hanford Concerns Council by Hanford Site contractors is completely voluntary.

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Advice Point #3: DOE should ensure that the medical support contractor remains independent with a priority to monitor and promote the health and safety of the Hanford employees. DOE should also ensure that the medical support contractor is integrated into the site worker health and safety objectives on a continuing and regular basis.

Response: DOE's goal is to obtain high quality Occupational Medicine Services to support a healthy Hanford workforce. The current Occupational Medicine contract is independent from the other Hanford contracts. In the acquisition of a follow-on Hanford Occupational Medicine contractor, DOE will evaluate all potential contracting arrangements to be able to maximize our goal of maintaining a high quality Occupational Medicine program.

Advice Point #4 : The Board advises DOE to ask the following questions in the RFP and the respondents should answer them:

- a. How do you propose providing the necessary quality medical service to the Hanford work force in a cost effective manner?
- b. How will you assimilate the core competencies of medical and industrial specialists in areas that represent unique risks at the Hanford Site?
- c. How will you incorporate the best practices and lessons learned from other DOE or industrial sites related to employee health?
- d. How will you reach out to the local medical community and the work force to educate them on the unique risks of Hanford workers including radiation, beryllium, and chemical vapors?
- e. How will you place emphasis on the preventative health care of the employees?
- f. What metrics will you use to demonstrate continuous improvement in areas such as progress on the reduction of risk to the employees, e.g., beryllium sensitizations and medical services cost effectiveness?
- g. How will you collect and analyze epidemiological data to provide a feedback loop that recognizes patterns and potential problem areas based upon patient data, while maintaining the confidentiality of the patients?
- h. How do you propose to interface and team with the other contractors to support the site priorities, such as identifying new sources of contamination and constructing individualized risk communication to current employees related to their work environment?
- i. How will you train your own employees on the Hanford risks?


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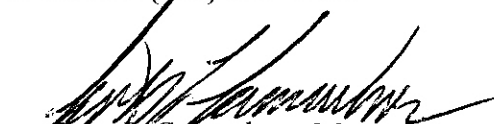
- j. What are your specific protocols, procedures, and tests for workers who present complaints or express symptoms of chemical exposure? (More specific detailed expectations can be provided to DOE if requested.)
- k. How will you achieve excellence in communication with the workforce to help them understand their choices for treatment as part of a medical action decision path when there is an exposure or injury?
- l. How will you give the injured employee the opportunity to determine the third parties present during the medical questioning and examination, including access to an independent employee ombudsman?
- m. How will you provide help to employees for referrals for medical services to external organizations?
- n. How will you provide help to employees on managing claims (such as offering assistance to employees on filing worker compensation claims, pursuant to Revised Code of Washington 51.28.010)?
- o. How will you protect the confidentiality of the patient's personal medical history and file?

The RFP should require the leadership of the prospective Hanford Site medical provider to exhibit principles of behavior that include caring for employees, teamwork with other site contractors, and a drive for improvement. This should be tested during the oral examination exercises for contractor selection.

Response: DOE appreciates the questions raised and the qualities identified in your advice. We will consider them along with other comments received on the draft RFP in developing the final RFP.

Thank you again for your focus on the health and safety of the Hanford workforce. If you have any questions, please contact Paula Call, DOE Richland Operations Office at (509) 376-2048 or Pamela McCann, DOE Office of River Protection at (509) 376-7663.


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Enclosure

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