



OCT 30 2009

Assistant Secretary for
Preparedness & Response
Washington, D.C. 20201

Darrell Henry
Executive Director
Healthcare Waste and Emergency Preparedness Coalition
P.O. Box 1949
Washington, DC 20001

Dear Mr. Henry:

Secretary Sebelius has asked me to thank you for your letter regarding onsite sterilization of infectious waste and to respond to you directly. I agree that this is an important issue and have forwarded your 6 Point Action Plan for medical waste sustainability during a pandemic to Robert Dugas, Team Leader, Hospital Preparedness Program (HPP), within the Office of the Assistant Secretary for Preparedness and Response (ASPR).

The FY 04 HPP Guidance refers to Occupational Safety and Health Administration (OSHA) standards addressing medical personnel and contaminated patents and provided Website links to these standards and related legislation (see "[Hazardous Waste Operations and Emergency Response](#)," 29 CFR 1910.120 and "[Medical Personnel Exposed to Patients Contaminated with Hazardous Waste](#)"). In the FY 05 HPP Guidance, states were encouraged to conduct a Hazard and Vulnerability Analysis. This Analysis was used to identify the community's risks and vulnerabilities, one of these being classified as hazardous waste plants. No further guidance was provided in reference to the proper disposal of infectious waste.

The HPP FY 07 Guidance provided a link to the OSHA Website but did not provide specific guidance for the treatment of infectious waste. Since its inception, the HPP has been concerned with the decontamination of victims of a chemical attack, in compliance with OSHA standards. However, the Guidance does not address the treatment of infectious waste after chemical attack victims are treated.

We will consider the Healthcare Waste and Emergency Preparedness Coalition 6 Point Action Plan as we draft the next version of our HPP Guidance. Thank you for your efforts on this important issue.

Sincerely,

Nicole Lurie, MD, MSPH
Assistant Secretary for Preparedness and Response

cc: K. Yeskey
R. Dugas