



BSC, NIOSH
Board of Scientific Counselors,
National Institute for Occupational Safety and Health

September 24, 2013

John Howard, M.D.
Director
National Institute for Occupational Safety and Health
Centers for Disease Control and Prevention
Department of Health and Human Services
395 E Street, S.W., Suite 9200
Washington, D.C. 20201

Re: The Vital Role of NIOSH Education and Research Centers and Centers for Agricultural Disease and Injury Research, Education and Prevention

Dear Dr. Howard:

In accordance with the section of its Charter that calls on the Board of Scientific Counselors (BSC) to advise you on “relevant needs in the fields of occupational safety and health”, the Board wishes to respectfully convey its finding that NIOSH’s 18 Education and Research Centers (ERCs) and 9 regional Centers for Agricultural Disease and Injury Research, Education and Prevention (Ag Centers) represent indispensable components of NIOSH’s efforts to reduce occupational injury and illness in the United States. NIOSH’s intramural and extramural research and innovation programs are recognized worldwide for their excellence in assessing the nature and prevention of workplace health hazards. The BSC believes that the preventive value of NIOSH research and innovation will suffer substantially if the professional education activities of the ERCs and the Ag Centers are reduced or eliminated.

Through their support of graduate educational programs, the ERCs supply over 75% of the nation’s occupational safety and health professionals in specialty areas like occupational medicine and advanced injury prevention. These graduate programs, together with the ERCs postgraduate and professional development programs for practicing safety and health professionals, represent the only viable means of supplying the professional workforce that is essential to translating NIOSH’s research advances into practice. In like manner, the Ag Centers represent the only substantive federal effort that offers state of the art educational outreach targeted to health professionals, managers and workers in the agricultural sector.

The capacity of NIOSH to fulfill its mission depends significantly on continuation of the vigorous educational activities provided by the ERCs and Ag Centers. These educational activities are unlikely to be replicated or replaced by alternative programs. Moreover, the faculty and trainees supported by ERCs and

Ag Centers contribute significantly to research and innovation in occupational safety and health. Steps by NIOSH to maintain the ERCs and Ag Centers, and to inform the nation of their crucial importance, address a highly relevant need in occupational safety and health.

Sincerely,

NIOSH Board of Scientific Counselors

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Bonnie Rogers".

Bonnie Rogers, M.E., B.S.N., M.P.H., Dr.P.H.,
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