



April 23, 2008

The Honorable Michael O. Leavitt
Secretary, U.S. Department of Health and Human Services
Hubert H. Humphrey Building, Sixth Floor
200 Independence Avenue, SW
Washington, DC 20201

Dear Secretary Leavitt:

On behalf of the American Industrial Hygiene Association (AIHA), I am writing to ask that you give serious consideration to a matter that affects the health and safety of workers across the country. In July of 2008, the 6-year term of Dr. John Howard as Director of the National Institute for Occupational Safety and Health (NIOSH) will expire. AIHA and our members urge you to not delay and quickly see that Dr. John Howard is reappointed to this position.

NIOSH, which functions under the auspices of the Centers for Disease Control, is the sole federal agency responsible for conducting research and making recommendations for the prevention of work-related disease and injury. It also investigates potentially hazardous working conditions; makes recommendations and disseminates information on preventing workplace disease, injury and disability; and provides training to occupational health and safety professionals.

During the tenure of Dr. Howard, the list of accomplishments of NIOSH is long and varied. To name just a few of the primary successes:

- Research to Practice – Establishment of a “Research to Practice (r2p)” office to foster transfer and diffusion of NIOSH-generated knowledge to partners and stakeholders.
- Access – Access to NIOSH research and results through the use of the internet and electronic communications means resulting in increased stakeholder contact with and input provided to NIOSH scientists.
- Emerging Issues – Positioning of NIOSH as one of the key partners in the National Nanotechnology Initiative by recognizing the early potential importance of nanotechnology.
- Quality Science – Assurance that policy decisions of the Institute have been grounded in and based on sound science.
- Performance Management – Institution of a rigorous program evaluation for NIOSH, resulting in review of various NIOSH programs by the National Academies of Science and the Institute of Medicine; as well as evaluation of the highly successful National Occupational Research Agenda.

- Values – Management of the agency effectively and fostering of the basic values throughout agency operations: relevance, diversity, quality, partnership, access, performance and accountability.

These are just a very few of the overall accomplishments of Dr. Howard during his tenure at NIOSH. The list of specific successes could go on and on.

I would also like to add one other note regarding Dr. Howard. Since the creation of NIOSH back in 1970, the agency has been well-served by Directors with an understanding, dedication and knowledge of occupational health and safety. However, I believe I am safe in saying that never in the history of the Institute has a Director been as successful and respected by partners and stakeholders as Dr. John Howard. This applies to one and all – professional associations, labor, industry, employers and workers. He has been more than a Director of NIOSH; he has been a partner and friend to AIHA and many others.

In closing, I urge you to reappoint Dr. John Howard as Director of NIOSH. Do not allow the enormous success of the past six years to go stale or the on-going efforts to be delayed. Dr. Howard has strong, capable leadership; is respected by NIOSH employees, partners and stakeholders; and has undoubtedly improved the health and safety of workers. Do not let this success languish for even one minute.

Thank you for your time and consideration. Should you have any questions please do not hesitate to contact me.

Sincerely,



Donald J. Hart, PhD, CIH
AIHA President

cc: AIHA Board of Directors
Steven Davis, AIHA Executive Director