

August 13, 2015

Francis Collins, MD, Ph.D.  
Director, National Institutes of Health  
Bethesda, Maryland 20892

Alan E. Guttmacher, M.D.  
Director, Eunice Kennedy Shriver National Institute of Child Health and Human  
Development  
Bethesda, Maryland 20892

Dear Drs. Collins and Guttmacher:

We appreciate the opportunity to provide comments on the proposed plan for the Environmental Influences on Child Health Outcomes (ECHO) program. We applaud your efforts to continue the study of environmental factors on children's health. ASPPH is the voice of accredited academic public health, representing schools and programs accredited by the Council on Education for Public Health (CEPH). Our mission is to transform public health by strengthening and promoting the education, research, service, and practice activities of CEPH-accredited schools and programs. Many of our members were initial sites in the National Children's Study and thus have considerable experience with, and a stake in, this research

The global burden of disease is due mostly to chronic diseases and conditions with origins in early life. Primary prevention represents the best hope to effectively reduce the global burden of chronic disease for both children and adults. We believe the ECHO program should focus data collection and implementation strategies on reducing the impact of environmental influences in utero and the first two years of infancy, "the first 1000 days."

The Core Elements and Focus Areas should clearly address how these areas can inform the developmental origins of chronic disease and how the selected childhood outcomes represent risk for disease throughout the life course. Taken together, ECHO should represent the NIH's commitment to develop a comprehensive strategy for the primary prevention of chronic diseases and conditions in both children and adults.

In regards to the core elements of the study, the use of multiple independent cohorts with coordinated core elements is an appropriate strategy. We respectfully request that you create new cohorts and/or recruit new mother/infant pairs into selected extant cohorts. This hybrid strategy will allow investigators to assess new environmental exposures that did not exist when extant cohorts were created. It will also permit the study of high-risk or high-interest populations that are not covered by extant cohorts.

## Board of Directors

### Chair

Gary E. Raskob, PhD, *Dean*  
University of Oklahoma Health Sciences Center  
College of Public Health

### President and CEO

Harrison C. Spencer, MD, MPH, DTM&H, CPH  
ASPPH

### Chair-Elect

Donna J. Petersen, ScD, MHS, CPH, *Dean*  
University of South Florida  
College of Public Health

### Immediate Past Chair

**Board Governance Committee Chair**  
John R. Finnegan, Jr., PhD, *Dean*  
University of Minnesota School of Public Health

### Secretary/Treasurer

Marjorie Aelion, PhD, SMCE, *Dean*  
University of Massachusetts-Amherst  
School of Public Health and Health Sciences

### Academic Public Health Practice Committee Chair

Lynn R. Goldman, MD, MS, MPH, *Dean*  
George Washington University  
Milken Institute School of Public Health

### Accreditation and Credentialing Committee Chair

Richard S. Kurz, PhD, *Dean*  
University of North Texas Health Science Center  
School of Public Health

### Data Advisory Committee Chair

Craig Blakely, PhD, MPH, *Dean*  
University of Louisville School of Public Health  
and Information Sciences

### Diversity and Inclusion Committee Chair

Cheryl Heaton, DrPH, *Dean*  
New York University  
Global Institute of Public Health

### Education Committee Chair

Randy Wykoff, MD, MPH & TM, *Dean*  
East Tennessee State University  
College of Public Health

### Global Health Committee Chair

James W. Curran, MD, MPH, *Dean*  
Emory University Rollins School of Public Health

### Legislative Committee Chair

Howard Frumkin, MD, DrPH, MPH, FACP, *Dean*  
University of Washington School of Public Health

### Research Committee Chair

Martin Philbert, PhD, *Dean*  
University of Michigan School of Public Health

### Communications Liaison

Susan J. Curry, PhD, *Dean*  
University of Iowa College of Public Health

### International Liaison

Kue Young, MD, MSc, FRCPC, DPhil, *Dean*  
University of Alberta School of Public Health

### Student Services Liaison

Cynthia Harris, PhD, DABT, *Director*  
Florida A&M University Public Health Program

### At Large Members

Robert Dittus, MD, MPH, *Director*  
Vanderbilt University  
Institute for Medicine and Public Health

Edward Lawlor, PhD, *Dean*  
Washington University in St. Louis  
Brown School Public Health Programs

Oladele Ogunseitan, PhD, MPH, *Director*  
University of California, Irvine  
Program in Public Health

Ayman El-Mohandes, MBBCh, MD, MPH, *Dean*  
CUNY School of Public Health

**Environmental influences on Child Health Outcomes**

August 13, 2015

Page Two

Lastly, we urge that the environmental assessment data that is collected by the ECHO program be comparable to the assessment data being developed as part of the Precision Medicine Initiative cohort study.

Please do not hesitate to contact us if you have any questions or if we can be of further assistance.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in dark ink, appearing to read "Harrison C. Spencer". The signature is fluid and cursive, with the first name being the most prominent.

Harrison C. Spencer, MD, MPH, DTM&H, CPH  
President and CEO