

July 24, 2001

William H. Sanders, III, PhD  
Director, Office of Pollution Prevention and Toxics  
Office of Prevention, Pesticides and Toxic Substances  
U.S. Environmental Protection Agency  
1200 Pennsylvania Avenue, NW  
Washington, DC 20460

Dear Dr. Sanders,

The purpose of this letter is to formally affirm AHA's commitment to the goal of our original partnership as described in the 1998 Memorandum of Understanding between AHA and EPA. That goal is to enhance efforts within the healthcare industry to minimize the production of persistent, bioaccumulative and toxic (PBT) pollutants and to reduce the volume of waste generated. In addition, we remain committed to the numerical goals established at that time:

- To virtually eliminate mercury-containing waste from the healthcare industry waste stream by the year 2005;
- To reduce the total volume of all wastes (including both regulated and non-regulated waste) generated by the healthcare industry, with an initial goal of achieving a 33 percent reduction in all hospitals by 2005 and a 50 percent reduction by 2010.

The Hospitals for a Healthy Environment (H2E) program, which grew out of the MOU, was created as the venue through which EPA, AHA and its partners can transfer technical information on pollution prevention opportunities to AHA institutional and personal members and to other health care professionals. Since its inception the H2E program has grown considerably and is now viewed as the guiding principle for actions underway in hundreds of hospitals nationwide. Both our organizations have received several letters recently testifying to this fact.

It is our intent to continue our partnership with EPA in Phase 2 of the H2E program, building upon the work completed under the 1998 MOU. Several technical tools were developed under the MOU to help hospitals minimize the production of persistent, bioaccumulative and toxic (PBT) pollutants and to reduce the volume of waste generated, including:

- A model mercury waste virtual elimination plan
- A model chemical waste minimization plan
- A model hospital-wide waste volume reduction plan

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- An ethylene oxide fact sheet
- Guidelines for environmentally preferable purchasing
- Guidelines for tracking environmental costs in hospitals
- A compilation of best management practices and a resource directory

Under Phase 2 of the program, AHA is committed to do the following:

- disseminate information, tools and resources on pollution prevention through educational and outreach activities, including the H2E website and list serve;
- encourage hospital commitment to pollution prevention activities through vehicles such as a reinvigorated pledge program and a national recognition program;
- collect and disseminate information documenting the hospital industry's progress toward the H2E program's goals.

We look forward to working with your staff to create the work plan for implementing Phase 2.

This partnership stands as a strong example of how public and private partners can work voluntarily to protect human health and the environment. We have already seen significant improvements. Many of our hospitals are reporting that they have not only achieved significant waste reductions, but have also realized significant cost savings and reductions in energy costs. I know that under Phase 2 of this project we will be able to report many more successes.

Sincerely,

Lindsay "Mac" Robinson  
Vice President