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Dean of Vet. Med.



Homeland
Security

May 23, 2011

Ralph C. Richardson, DVM, Dipl ACVIM
Dean, College of Veterinary Medicine
Kansas State University
101 Trotter Hall
Manhattan, KS 66506-5601

Dear Drs. Richardson and Monath:

Thank you for your letter of April 23, 2011, to the Department of Homeland Security (DHS) concerning the Institute of Medicine (IOM)/National Research Council "One Health IOM Study/Report."

"One Health" is a concept wholly embraced within DHS. With the realization that so many diseases of concern affect both humans and animals, it is critical that we recognize the need for greater synergies between human veterinary and environmental health. The results will not only improve our efficiency and efficacy, but will lead to better outcomes for all involved.

Within DHS, the Office of Health Affairs (OHA) has numerous physicians, veterinarians and environmental health professionals working side by side. This close collaboration is crucial as they pursue their goal of providing health and medical expertise in support of the DHS mission to prepare for, respond to, and recover from all hazards impacting the nation's health security. An OHA representative currently serves on an informal interagency working group dedicated to One Health with colleagues from the Department of Agriculture and the Department of Health and Human Services' Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, National Institutes of Health, and Food and Drug Administration.

In addition, the National Biosurveillance Information Center (NBIC), also within OHA, integrates bio-monitoring activities of executive branch departments and agencies to provide a biological common operating picture and facilitate earlier detection of adverse events and trends. NBIC fuses information from more than twelve federal departments and agencies and state, local, private sector, and international sources of biosurveillance data on human, animal, plant, and environmental health to provide early warnings of a possible biological attack or a pandemic.

Thank you again for sharing your concern. DHS is dedicated to the practice of One Health and will continue to support this effort by engaging other departments and agencies on the necessity for ongoing integration of medical, veterinary, and environmental science to further public and animal health.

Sincerely yours,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Alexander G. Garza MD, MPH".

Alexander G. Garza MD, MPH
Assistant Secretary for Health Affairs
and Chief Medical Officer