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Subject: CENTER Report for Administration
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Attached:

Nick: As requested. Dave and Ted

April 15,

2001

Highlights from the Center for Occupational and Environmental Health (AY 2000 - 2001)

The Hunter College Center for Occupational and Environmental Health (COEH) has successfully completed its **first decade** of activities promoting urban community and workplace health. It now stands poised to expand these activities and undertake new, exciting projects as part of the new Urban Public Health Program at the Hunter College School of Health Sciences.

The Center was established in 1990 by the Board of Trustees of the City University of New York (CUNY) as a research, training and educational center whose mission is to promote community and workplace health. Hunter COEH works with community-based organizations, schools, libraries, labor unions, private employers and municipal and state agencies to promote better understanding, access to information and improved skills in addressing workplace and environmental concerns.

The Center now has 15 paid staff members including 8 full-time staff and 7 part-time research assistants (interns), as well as several unpaid Hunter student interns each semester. Its Director is **Dr. David Kotelchuck**, CIH, Associate Professor in the Urban Public Health Program at the Hunter College School of Health Sciences and one of the Center's founding Co-Directors. The professional credentials of our staff include community health education, epidemiology, industrial hygiene, urban environmental health, occupational health and safety and community organizing.

The Center has developed a number of partnerships over the years. Funders include the Division of Community Health Works at the NYC Department of Health, the New York City Housing Authority, the United States Environmental Protection Agency, the National Institute for Environmental Health Sciences, the New York City Department of Environmental Protection, the Agency for Toxic Substances and Disease Registry and Medical and Health Research Associates, Inc.

Our staff has presented eleven papers at four professional conferences in the past year, and three manuscripts are in development for peer-reviewed publications.

With the exception of Director Kotelchuck, Hunter COEH is completely grant-and

contract-funded. In the past decade, it has been supported by federal, state and local governments, private foundations, labor unions, and private and public employers.

In the past few years, Hunter COEH has conducted programs on:

- Urban revitalization and hazardous waste worker protection and job training with the National Institute of Environmental Health Sciences;
 - Asthma community education and technical assistance with the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency, the New York City Council and the NYC Department of Health;
 - Environmental hazard evaluation research, risk communication and community cancer prevention with the NYC Department of Environmental Protection;
 - Lead poisoning prevention with the Brooklyn and Manhattan Borough Presidents' Offices;
- and
- Occupational hazard assessment and worker training with the NYS Department of Labor.

Hunter COEH is affiliated with the the Hunter College Urban Public Health program, created in 1998 under the leadership of **Professor Nicholas Freudenberg**. Dr. Kotelchuck is a faculty member in the Environmental and Occupational Health Sciences track of the UPH program, and four full-time Center staff members are currently enrolled in or recent graduates of one of the tracks of the UPH program. A faculty advisory committee is currently being organized by Hunter College to advise and support the Center and help integrate its activities with the Urban Public Health Program.

During the past year, **Daniel Kass, MSPH**, Executive Director and then Co-Director of the Center during the past decade, has left Hunter College to become Director of Research and Evaluation for the Childhood Asthma Initiative of the New York City Department of Health, and to continue his doctoral research at New York University.

Part One: OCCUPATIONAL HEALTH AND SAFETY PROGRAM HIGHLIGHTS

1. Hazardous Materials & Emergency Response Training

Now in the first year of a four year grant funded by the National Institute of Environmental Health Sciences, in cooperation with the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency, the goal of this program is to educate personnel exposed to hazardous waste materials and responsible for emergency response in the proper procedures and protocols required under the Hazwoper Standard 1910.120 to enable them to protect their own and others' health and safety when handling hazardous materials, and safely contain hazardous chemical spills and fires. The Center received \$98,000 this year for this activity.

2. New York City Housing Authority Environmental Worker Training Program (Year 2)

In partnership with the New York City Housing Authority (NYCHA), this 17-week program consists of training for four groups of public housing residents, age 18 to 32, (total of 100 trainees) in asbestos remediation, lead-based paint remediation, hazardous waste materials handling, and basic OSHA workplace protections, as well as basic math, reading and writing skills, resume preparation, and job-readiness skills. The Center will receive up to **\$180,000** this year for its role in organizing and administering the program.

3. Minority Worker Training Program

The goal of this small, ongoing program is to educate young people of color considering jobs in trade unions and environmental firms about the environmental hazards they may encounter and how to recognize, evaluate, and control exposure to those same hazards. To teach basic life skills, literacy skills, and job skills that will enable these youth to compete in a changing labor market. This year, ten (10) students participated in the 24-Hour Environmental Monitoring Training Course held at the Carpenters' Union in downtown Manhattan.

NEW PLANS AND IDEAS FOR OUR OCCUPATIONAL HEALTH AND SAFETY PROGRAMS

1. Dr. Kotelchuck is currently engaged in assessing reporting of needlestick injuries among dental students and hospital internes and residents. He has an \$7,500 pilot training grant for this project from the National Institute for Occupational Safety and Health, and based on these results plans to submit a substantial research grant for continuation of the project at the Center.

2. Dr. Kotelchuck and staff member Andrew Burgie are planning to extend their current hazardous waste and emergency response training efforts through cooperative training efforts with other CUNY schools, such as Medgar Evers College and other community and four-year colleges, to prepare undergraduates for employment as environmental technicians. There is currently great demand for persons qualified at this level. Funding will be sought from the National Science Foundation, among others.

PART TWO: ENVIRONMENTAL HEALTH PROGRAM HIGHLIGHTS

1. INTEGRATED PEST MANAGEMENT AND ASTHMA TRIGGER REDUCTION IN NEW YORK CITY PUBLIC HOUSING DEVELOPMENTS

Based on our successful pilot study and intervention project at Lehman Village Houses in East Harlem, the mission of the project is to decrease the prevalence of cockroaches and rodents in public housing, and by doing so, reduce the need for pesticide use and the rate of asthma morbidity. With three years of annual funding from the NY City Council through the NYCDOH in the amount of approximately **\$180,000 per year**, the Center will be responsible to implementing the research components of the project; designing the specific interventions, and supervising the implementation of project protocols. Over 2,000 apartments per year are expected to be involved. The Center has played a central role in moving the largest public housing authority in the country (over 600,000 residents) and one of the largest users of pesticides in New York City to adopt the initial stages of an integrated pest management approach to an environmental health problem.

2. Citywide Community Asthma Management Program

This program has received **\$280,000 (\$130,000 this year)** in funding from the New York City Department of Health (NYCDOH). In partnership with the NYCDOH Citywide Childhood

Asthma Initiative, it aims to reduce the burden of asthma on communities at-risk by taking a public health approach to reduce mortality and morbidity associated with childhood asthma. We support community-based organizations funded by the NYCDOH Citywide Childhood Asthma Initiative by providing assistance in needs assessment, program development, health education, staff development, technical assistance and performance evaluation to community-based efforts.

3. Lead Poisoning Prevention Program

Funded by the Brooklyn Borough President through the NYCDOH Office of Lead Poisoning Prevention, the goal of this program is to provide community trainings on lead poisoning prevention and Local Law 38 to the health districts of Brooklyn with the highest incidence of lead poisoning, including Bedford-Stuyvesant, Fort Greene, Flatbush and Bushwick. This is an on-going program that receives approximately **\$35,000 annually**.

At this time, the Center is working on the 2000-2001 Lead Poisoning Prevention Project, whose main goal is to provide 25 trainings on lead poisoning prevention to the same Brooklyn health districts as last year. This time, the program will make special efforts to reach out to recent immigrant communities, especially the Latino communities, which are at a high risk for lead poisoning. To assist in achieving this goal, the Seminars to Train Outreach Leaders to Prevent Lead Poisoning (S.T.O.P) Training Manual issued by the Department of Health, which trains outreach leaders in lead prevention, will be translated into Spanish by the COEH staff.

NEW PLANS AND IDEAS FOR OUR ENVIRONMENTAL HEALTH PROGRAMS

1 Healthy Homes Initiative

In support of the new Healthy Homes Initiative project run by **Dr. Susan Klitzman** and **Dr. Jack Carravanos**, faculty members Urban Public Health Program at the Hunter College School of Health Sciences, the Center provides curriculum development and training for staff and intervention teams in the areas of asthma trigger reduction, integrated pest management, childhood lead poisoning prevention, fire prevention, home safety, and poisoning prevention. Funding for this year is expected to be **approximately \$30,000**.

2. Community Health Worker Training Project

This is a major new initiative for the Center. With an advisory committee consisting of Dean Sherwen, Dr. Freudenberg, Dr. Kotelchuck, Louise Cohen (Director, NYCDOH Childhood Asthma Initiative, and staff members Elena Schwolsky, Sergio Matos, and Ted Outwater, the Center is proposing a 3-year project that will develop and support the important role of Community Health Workers (CHWs) in the New York City health care system by developing a Community Health Worker Project linked to the research and educational resources of the City University of New York (CUNY).

The Community Health Worker Project at Hunter College proposes to:

- Develop a CHW research agenda in New York City by analyzing CHW roles in various settings including managed care organizations, public health agencies and community-based

organizations; and conducting a labor market survey to determine existing and potential employment opportunities for CHWs in New York City.

- Develop a New York City CHW Education Program utilizing the resources of the City University of New York, which would provide comprehensive training, career development, linkages to academic credit and seamless transition to higher education.
- Develop CHW advocacy in New York City by bringing CHWs together and providing a forum for networking, mutual support, policy discussion and leadership development.

The Center is seeking first year funding of approximately \$187,000 for this project. The United Hospital Fund has expressed an interest in discussing possible funding for this project.