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**Darrell G. Kirch, M.D.**  
President

September 20, 2006

Docket ID No. EPA-HQ-RCRA-2003-0012  
U.S. Environmental Protection Agency  
1200 Pennsylvania Ave, NW  
Washington, DC 20460  
By email: [a-and-r-docket@epa.gov](mailto:a-and-r-docket@epa.gov)

**Re: Standards applicable to Generators of Hazardous Waste; Subpart K—  
Standards Applicable to Academic Laboratories, 71 FR 29712-52**

The following are the comments of the Association of American Medical Colleges (AAMC) concerning the Environmental Protection Agency's notice of proposed rulemaking (NPRM) on standards applicable to academic laboratories in the generation of hazardous waste. The AAMC represents all 125 U.S. allopathic medical schools, nearly 400 affiliated teaching hospitals, and 94 academic and scientific societies. Our member institutions maintain extensive research operations and many of these organizations, either independently or as part of larger universities, have a substantial interest in the proposed rule.

The AAMC strongly supports the proposal to permit academic institutions the option to adopt performance-based standards for handling and disposing hazardous wastes. The proposed rule would grant universities, medical schools, and others flexibility to fulfill their environmental responsibilities in ways that would be most appropriate, rational and effective. The voluntary rule would be available to these institutions as an alternative to standard procedures designed primarily for industrial waste generators. The notice is correct that universities and other academic institutions typically generate far smaller quantities of waste than industrial generators, under circumstances that are distinctly different from those common to industry. The Association has long called for the development of performance-based standards for hazardous waste disposal at academic institutions, including in comment letters to the Office of Management and Budget<sup>1</sup> and Office of Science and Technology Policy.<sup>2</sup> Most recently, we endorsed the comments on this NPRM submitted by the American Council on Education and the National

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<sup>1</sup> AAMC, with the Federation of American Societies for Experimental Biology, comment letter to Mr. John Morrall, May 16, 2002. <http://www.aamc.org/advocacy/library/research/corres/2002/051602.htm>.

<sup>2</sup> AAMC letter to Dr. Michael Holland, October 2, 2003.  
[http://rbm.nih.gov/fed\\_reg\\_20030906/FRNotice/Associations/AAMC.pdf](http://rbm.nih.gov/fed_reg_20030906/FRNotice/Associations/AAMC.pdf)

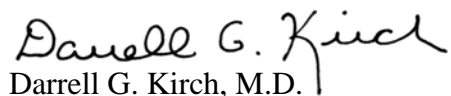
Association of College and University Business Officers (comment letter, August 18, 2006). We are writing here to reiterate and elaborate on those comments concerning laboratories in affiliated academic hospitals.

The NPRM's preamble states that, "the waste generation pattern at [academic affiliated] hospital laboratories differs substantially from the research or teaching laboratories at a college or university" (p. 29723). The statement is generally true, primarily with respect to laboratories that perform routine clinical services and testing and are themselves appropriately regulated according to established state and local laws, as well as through standards necessary for accreditation. However, the relationships of universities and medical schools with affiliated hospitals are extraordinarily diverse, and often hospital buildings house faculty research laboratories that are seamlessly integrated within the academic medical center. It could be difficult and arbitrary for an academic institution's waste management planning to treat faculty research laboratories differently because they happen to be located in what is legally hospital space.

The AAMC believes that it would be consistent with the EPA's objectives and rationale if the final rule provided academic institutions the option to include faculty research labs in affiliated hospitals within their management plans when such inclusion is reasonable.

In closing, the Association commends the EPA for its diligent and responsive efforts to advance this important reform. Requests for further information or clarification on AAMC's comments should be directed to Stephen Heinig at 202-828-0488, [sheinig@aamc.org](mailto:sheinig@aamc.org).

Sincerely,

  
Darrell G. Kirch, M.D.