National Biosafety Stewardship Month

As you may know, there have been recent lapses in safety practices at federal laboratories involving potentially lethal microbes such as Influenzavirus-H5N1 (avian influenza) and Bacillus anthracis (anthrax), and one incident that involved the discovery of 60-year old vials of Variolavirus (smallpox) in an FDA laboratory located on the NIH campus in Bethesda, MD.

In an effort to improve biosafety awareness, strengthen biosafety practice, and restore public trust, September has been declared National Biosafety Stewardship Month.

All NIH laboratories will, and all grantee institutions are urged to:

- Reexamine current policies and procedures for biosafety practices
- Conduct inventories of infectious agents, toxins, and other biological materials
- Reinforce biosafety training

This is a great opportunity for TTUHSC/TTUHSC-El Paso researchers to re-focus on safety, assure that all pathogens and toxins are accounted for, and to properly dispose of any samples that are no longer needed.

TTUHSC/TTUHSC-El Paso investigators: Spend some time during the remaining weeks of September to conduct an inventory of infectious agents and toxins. Make sure your research materials are all accounted for, and that you have the appropriate institutional approvals. Check all your refrigerators, freezers, and cabinets for forgotten or abandoned agents or samples. Assure these are safely removed and properly disposed. This is also a great opportunity to remove old, broken or unneeded equipment.

As you go through the inventory process, please do not hesitate to contact Safety Services, the IBC, or the RDBC if you have any questions or concerns about the rules that may apply to your research.

You may find more information about National Biosafety Stewardship Month and the unfortunate incidents that led up to it HERE. In addition, an NIH Guide Notice declaring September as National Biosafety Stewardship Month can be found HERE.

Let’s work together this month to promote biosafety and conscientious research practices that will strengthen the Culture of Safety at TTUHSC and TTUHSC-El Paso.

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