



December 8, 2010

Thomas Frieden MD, MPH
Director
Centers for Disease Control and Prevention
1600 Clifton Road, NE
Mailstop D-14
Atlanta, GA 30333

Dear Dr. Frieden,

Recently CSTE and ASTHO collaborated in conducting a detailed assessment of radiation planning and preparedness in state public health departments. This effort was initiated as part of the emerging National Alliance for Radiation Readiness, and is an attempt to assess the current capabilities, resources and level of preparedness to respond to radiation emergencies. We are pleased to share the results of that assessment with you (enclosure).

The data from the assessment are sobering and indicate that in almost every measure of public health capacity and capability the states remain poorly prepared to respond to a major radiation emergency incident. The majority of the 38 states responding to the survey reported no more than a minimal extent of planning and readiness for a radiation emergency exclusive of plans for nuclear power plant emergencies, and indicated that they did not have adequately trained staff and resources. The respondents were asked to provide an overall subjective radiation preparedness score on a scale of 1 to 10; the average of the self-assigned scores was 4.54.

Addressing these deficiencies across the country should be a priority for CDC public health emergency preparedness efforts. The grant guidance and funding plans currently being developed for the 2011-2016 cycle of Public Health Preparedness cooperative agreements with the states present an excellent opportunity to address the need for radiation preparedness in the states. The findings of this survey should also be relevant to colleagues at the Office of the Assistant Secretary for Preparedness and Response.

We would be pleased to discuss these findings and our recommendations with you further. Thank you for your consideration.

Sincerely,

Stephen M. Ostroff, MD
President, CSTE

John Auerbach, MBA
President, ASTHO

cc: Ali Kahn, MD, Centers for Disease Control and Prevention
Robert M Pestronk, MPH, National Association of County and City Health Officials
Scott J. Becker, MS, Association of Public Health Laboratories
Nicole Lurie, MD, MSPH, Assistant Secretary for Preparedness and Response

Enclosure