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Office of the Surgeon General
Rockville MD 20857

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El Paso, Texas
March 5, 2004

Elaine Mowinski Barron, M.D.
Joint Advisory Committee for the Improvement of Air Quality
401 E. Franklin Suite 560
El Paso, TX 79901

Dear Dr. Barron:

The Surgeon General has asked me to reply to your recent letter regarding Surgeon General Communications and Hispanic Health issues. As Surgeon General, and a Hispanic physician, he has been very pleased to place a major focus on the issue of Health Disparities. This area encompasses many minority populations including our largest United States minority, Hispanics. In fact, prevention, preparedness and health disparities are the three major issues upon which Dr. Carmona has chosen to focus as Surgeon General.

In addition, Secretary Thompson has charged Deputy Secretary Claude Allen with overseeing HHS efforts to improve minority health and eliminate health disparities. Also, our Acting Assistant Secretary for Health, Dr. Cristina Beato, herself a Hispanic, bilingual physician, has been very active in overseeing and leading many of our public health initiatives to improve minority health and "close the gap." Our many programs to address the unmet needs of our minority populations are driven by the best scientific evidence available. Hispanics are among the many diverse minority populations that we have the privilege and responsibility to serve.

Their needs are unique and frequently overlap with other minority populations. Through regular culturally relevant communications and programmatic offerings we are committed to creating a legacy of improved health for all Americans, including Hispanics and other minority populations.

The Surgeon General has asked that I express his thanks to you and the Joint Advisory Committee for the Improvement of Air Quality for your interest in Hispanic health care issues.

Sincerely,

Allan S. Noonan, M.D., M.P.H
CAPT, USPHS
Office of the Surgeon General