



Southwest Foundation for Biomedical Research

Office of the President

November 13, 2002

David H. Walker, MD
 Executive Director
 UTMB Center for Biodefense and Emerging Infectious Diseases
 University of Texas Medical Branch
 301 University Boulevard
 Galveston, Texas 77555-0609

RE: *Regional Center of Excellence in Biodefense and Emerging Infectious Diseases*

Dear Dr. Walker:

I wish to confirm the commitment of the Southwest Foundation for Biomedical Research (SFBR) to the *Regional Center of Excellence in Biodefense & Emerging Infectious Diseases (RCE)* you are developing. We are eager to be a part of this superb team you have assembled and will bring substantial resources to the table.

Scientists in SFBR's Department of Virology & Immunology have in-depth experience in viral vaccine development, viral therapeutics, HIV, SIV, viral hepatitis, anthrax, viral hemorrhagic fevers, and dengue, as well as the study of unknown infectious agents, to name but a few. They work in an ultramodern laboratory complex opened in 1999, which has 3 BSL-3 suites and a full-suit BSL-4 laboratory. Many of the staff possess security clearances and have considerable experience in classified research and collaborations with national defense agencies. Further, SFBR has enormous non-human primate resources: some 4,000 baboons, over 200 chimpanzees, and colonies of rhesus and other primate species. A significant element of our campus is the Southwest National Primate Research Center which helps us exploit the tremendous value of these research animals in nationwide collaborative studies.

We are currently constructing an animal ABSL-3 laboratory which will permit studies of Category A-C agents with small animal models as well as non-human primate models. This facility should be completed within three months, and will lend another valuable resource to the RCE.

Finally, our faculty is committed to the training element inherent in the RCE's mission. This, training component, plus the other resources I have listed, will have my full support.

Sincerely,

Frank F. Ledford, Jr., MD, FACS
 President

cc: Stanley M. Lemon, MD
 Robert E. Shade, PhD
 Jean L. Patterson, PhD
 Suzette Tardif, PhD