



November 2, 2004

Dear Colleague,

This letter is to introduce the Tier 1 Lab Bioterrorism Recognition Course that is being offered through the Alberta Provincial Laboratory for Public Health as a joint initiative between Health Canada and the provincial/territorial governments.

In January, 2003, the Canadian Public Health Laboratory Network (CPHLN) Bioterrorism Sub-Committee contacted the Centre for Emergency Preparedness and Response (CEPR) at Health Canada to collaborate on a training course for Tier 1 (clinical microbiology) laboratories. Provincial Lab Directors were asked to identify instructors from each province/territory to coordinate the delivery of this course.

The Tier 1 Lab Bioterrorism Recognition Course has been designed for Tier 1 laboratorians so that they may better identify bacterial and viral agents of bioterrorism in a lab setting. The course includes a combination of lectures, discussions and a wet lab presented in a one day workshop format. There are six main components:

- Brief history of Bioterrorism
- Bacterial Agents of Bioterrorism
- Viral Agents of Bioterrorism
- Transportation of Dangerous Goods
- Contact List
- Wet Lab

The wet lab gives the participants hands-on experience with containment level two 'surrogate' organisms that have been selected to mimic specified containment level 3 bacterial pathogens. It will offer practical identification tools to facilitate early recognition of these less common organisms.

While the focus of this workshop is bioterrorism preparedness, the more practical outcome is the improved lab safety that will result from early recognition and appropriate containment of these highly infectious agents.

This course is free of charge to Tier 1 laboratorians, and participants are eligible for eight Category 1 Canadian College of Microbiologists (CCM) continuing education credits upon completion of the course. Initially this course will be delivered 'in person', but it is the intention of the CEPR to offer it in an e-learning format in the near future. This will insure that this training opportunity is available to all laboratorians across the country.

In order to offer this course to all Tier 1 laboratories in Alberta, it will be necessary to limit attendance to one participant from each laboratory. It is hoped that the participant will take the training materials back to their own labs, and share the course content with their fellow technologists. We have three training events tentatively scheduled at this time; two at the Edmonton ProvLab site and one at the Calgary ProvLab site.

Event #1 Edmonton Site: Either Friday, January 28 OR Saturday, January 29, 2005
Event #2 Edmonton Site: Either Friday, February 11 OR Saturday, February 12, 2005
Event #3 Calgary Site: Saturday, February 26, 2005

In order to optimize participation in the wet lab, we will need to limit each event to 10-15 people. To assist with registration, we are asking each participant to indicate on the enclosed registration form their first and second choices for attendance. The selection of either Friday or Saturday for the first two training events will depend on participant feedback. We will make every effort to accommodate the first choice, but this will be very dependent on whether there is an even distribution of participant choice amongst the three scheduled events.

Please complete and return the enclosed registration form to me (contact information below) **no later than Friday, November 26, 2004**. We will confirm the event for which you have been registered by Friday, December 17, 2004. Information about hotel accommodation will be available on request at that time.

Please feel free to contact me if you have any questions. I look forward to meeting you early in the New Year.

Best Regards,

Marguerite

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