



March 27, 2012

Paul B. English, PhD, MPH  
Branch Science Advisor  
California Department of Public Health  
Environmental Health Investigations Branch  
850 Marina Bay Parkway, MS 7513  
Richmond, CA 94804-6403

Dear Dr. English:

The Agency for Toxic Substances and Disease Registry's (ATSDR) Division of Health Studies is happy to endorse the metropolitan area-based Amyotrophic Lateral Sclerosis (ALS) surveillance project in San Francisco and Los Angeles, and we are very pleased to be able to fund this project. ATSDR is responsible for developing and maintaining a National ALS Disease Registry. As noted on our website, "the goals of the registry are to collect information that can be used to estimate the number of new cases of ALS that will be found each year. The information will also be used to estimate the number of people who have ALS at a specific point in time. Registry information can also be used to better understand the risk factors for ALS as well as care and treatment issues. The information could be used also to improve how the disease is managed and how standards of care are developed."

The National ALS Registry is currently comprised of cases gathered from several administrative datasets, including the Centers for Medicaid and Medicare Services (CMS), the Veterans Health Administration (VHA), and the Veterans Benefits Administration (VBA), as well as self-registered individuals. The state-based surveillance projects, such as in your state, will allow us to evaluate the completeness of the National ALS Registry. In addition, it will assist the states in obtaining quality data about those with ALS in their states.

The California Department of Public Health is to be commended for leading the way on this groundbreaking effort against ALS, and we hope that you will be successful in your efforts to work with the neurological community in San Francisco and Los Angeles.

Thank you for your assistance with this important initiative.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read "H. Edward Murray".

H. Edward Murray, Ph.D., Captain, USPHS  
Acting Director  
Division of Toxicology and Human Health Sciences (proposed)