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MEMORANDUM

TO: Paul Gosselin, Assistant Director **HSM-98011**
Division of Registration and Health Evaluation

FROM: John Sanders, Branch Chief [original signed by John Sanders]
Worker Health and Safety Branch

DATE: November 30, 1998

SUBJECT: POLICY FOR RELEASE OF INDIVIDUALS' PERSONAL
INFORMATION FOR RESEARCH PURPOSES

BACKGROUND

Worker Health and Safety Branch maintains a pesticide illness surveillance database (Pesticide Illness Surveillance Program or PISP). Reports of illness and injury are received from physicians via a physician-reporting requirement and from workers' compensation reports. These records contain confidential medical information and personal identifiers.

Infrequently, PISP receives a research request for access to personal identifiers in our records. The researchers need access to the records so they can contact the exposed persons for follow-up research.

POLICY

In general, WH&S does not release confidential information and follows the guidelines outlined in DPR Policy Letter I-01, "Guidelines for Public Disclosure of Records". These guidelines are based on the Information Practices Act (California Civil Code section 1798 et seq.).

With limited exceptions, the Information Practices Act (IPA) prohibits us from disclosing personal information in a manner that links the information disclosed to the individual to whom the information pertains. There is an exception for disclosures to certain research organizations.

For requests from researchers for access to or copies of documents containing individual, medical or other personal information, WH&S staff will adhere to the following policy:

1. The IPA (Civil Code § 1798.24(t)) allows disclosure of personal information in a manner that links the personal information to the individual **only** to the University of California (UC) or a nonprofit educational institution conducting scientific research.
2. The information request must include assurances of the need for the personal information, procedures for protecting the confidentiality of the information and assurance that the personal identity of the subject shall not be further disclosed in individually identifiable form.
3. If the research organization requesting the personal information is not the UC or a nonprofit educational institution, they must contract the research with a qualifying educational organization or the information request will be denied.
4. The request will be reviewed by the supervisor of the Pesticide Illness Surveillance Program prior to the release of any data. The review will ensure that all the requirements of the IPA are met.

Approval: _____
[Original signed by Paul Gosselin]
Paul Gosselin
Assistant Director

Date: _____