DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH & HUMAN SERVICES

Office of the Secretary

Office of Global Health Affairs
Washington DC 20201

MAY 16 2006

The Honorable Scott Garrett
U.S. House of Representatives
1318 Longworth House Office Building
Washington, D.C. 20515

Dear Representative Garrett:

Thank you for your inquiry regarding the preparations we at the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services (HHS) are making for the XVI International AIDS Society Conference in Toronto, Canada, in August 2006. Secretary Leavitt appreciates the time you took to write, and he has asked for me to reply to you directly. Under the President's Emergency Plan for AIDS Relief, HHS believes the priority for our spending is on prevention, care, and treatment activities for persons infected with or affected by HIV/AIDS.

HHS will be sending 78 employees to the XVI International AIDS Conference in Toronto. In addition to these attendees, HHS will contribute to a single, U.S. Government-wide exhibit booth to highlight work across HHS and across other Federal Departments and Agencies as part of the Emergency Plan. We will also host a satellite meeting focused on twinning, an important activity of the HHS Health Resources and Services Administration that brings together U.S. and third-country institutions with local counterparts in the 15 focus countries of the Emergency Plan for the purposes of training and capacity-building. We estimate the total cost for HHS participation in the Toronto meeting this year will be approximately $315,000, including approximately $170,000 for hotel costs and per diem, $45,000 for registration, $65,000 for airfare (from Washington D.C., Atlanta, and overseas), $15,000 for our share of the booth, and $20,000 for the satellite meeting. This represents significantly lower costs for the Department than past AIDS conferences.

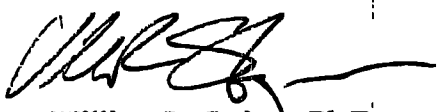
We are also limiting the use of U.S. Government funds on the part of HHS grantees and contractors for participation in this conference. No HHS grantee may use Federal funds to send personnel to the conference unless such participation is justifiable under the terms and conditions of the grant award; similarly, a contractor may use Federal funds for activities related to the conference only if they fall under the statement of work. Moreover, each HHS grantee or contractor may send only one person to this meeting with Foreign Operations funds or funds appropriated directly to HHS for international activities. Each HHS Operating Division has its own policy on the use of funds appropriated for domestic AIDS work for conference attendance. At this time, we do not

know the number of organizations that will use HHS funding for registration and travel to this conference, as registration is still open.

We appreciate your concern about this issue. HHS continues to work toward the most efficient and targeted use of the funds with which the U.S. Government entrusts us, and to ensure our international travel and participation in international conferences is cost-effective for the American taxpayer.

I would be happy to answer any questions you might have on this matter. Please accept my best regards.

Sincerely,



William R. Steiger, Ph.D.
Special Assistant for the Secretary
for International Affairs

Cc: The Honorable Todd Akin
The Honorable Chris Chocola
The Honorable Tom Cole
The Honorable Steve King
The Honorable John Kline
The Honorable Joseph Pitts
The Honorable Mark Souder
The Honorable Lynn Woolsey