

DCN 7470

14015 Windsor Road  
Little Rock, AR 72212  
August 12, 2005

The Honorable Anthony J. Principi, Chairman  
Base Realignment and Closure Commission (BRAC)  
2521 South Clark Street, Suite 600  
Arlington, VA 22202

BRAC Commission

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Received

Dear Chairman Principi,

I am writing to urge the BRAC to remove the Armed Forces Institute of Pathology (AFIP) from the list of military facilities slated for closure. The AFIP is an irreplaceable resource for disease research and patient care. It is known worldwide for its excellence and service to both the military and civilian communities and also contributes significant knowledge and education to the broader medical field's understanding of human disease.

The AFIP tissue repository is a valuable national treasure that must remain accessible to researchers and experts in laboratory medicine. As an example, AFIP materials were used in recent years to study the killer strain of 1918 influenza virus by using the archived tissues. The AFIP's collection of specimens has helped medical professionals understand and develop vaccines and treatments for diseases. Access to both archived materials as well as newly acquired specimens must be preserved.

Each year the AFIP issues hundreds of thousands of hours in continuing medical education to a diverse group of medical professionals that specialize in pathology and veterinary pathology through a variety of seminars, lectures, and internet assisted learning. As a veterinary pathologist, I usually first get to see an example of a new or exotic disease from throughout the world by participating in the AFIP Department of Veterinary Pathology's slide conference.

The AFIP's leadership in the area of education and training advances the knowledge base and ensures the competence of thousands of medical professionals. It would be a major loss to both military and civilian medicine, if AFIP's consultative services were discontinued.

Should the AFIP be forced to close, our nation would lose a valuable resource that plays a key role in the advancement of medicine and contributes knowledge to improve the health of our nation's citizens. First, I respectfully request that the BRAC eliminate its recommendation to dismantle the AFIP. No where else in the world is there such a renowned group of specialists in all fields of pathology. Second, I urge the BRAC to ensure that the integrity of the tissue repository is preserved.

I have worked and studied at the AFIP. It is a great institution. Thank you for your kind consideration.

Sincerely,



James O. Britt, DVM, MS  
Veterinary Pathologist