

Michael D. Lagios, M.D.
The Breast Cancer Consultation Service

August 14, 2005

BRAC Commission

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

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Dear Chairman Principi:

You will receive many letters urging you and your colleagues to delete the Armed Forces Institute of Pathology from the base closure list; I respectfully ask that you carefully consider their arguments and my own.

The AFIP, among its many functions, is also a unique archival database for human tissues. Some idea of the value of this resource can be obtained by reflecting on recent efforts to extract viral genomic material from paraffin blocs of lung tissue from the 1918 influenza victims which are stored at the facility - a research effort which was designed to understand the genetic bases for the 1918 pan-epidemic in an effort to preemptively develop future vaccines. Similar efforts can greatly facilitate the development of medical interventions designed to combat viral bioterrorist devices.

Some may propose that such capabilities already exist in the civilian sector - they do not. Moreover, current medical financial arrangements are not conducive to storing archival material. Whereas 30 years ago even a small community hospital might store tissue blocs forever, increasing costs have reduced the level of support for such storage, let alone its compilation and retrieval. The impact of restricted finances, particularly on archival materials, is felt even more strongly in the university community.

Closing the AFIP will have many adverse effects on our prestige abroad, on our support of medical education and our research capabilities in forensic pathology and the pathobiology of infectious diseases. I ask you to consider only the one unique aspect of the institution which is impossible to duplicate outside of a dedicated facility - as a unique treasury of archived and retrievable human pathology.

Sincerely,



MICHAEL D. LAGIOS, M.D.
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service at Armed Forces Institute of Pathology,
February, 1971, to June, 1972)

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