



THE SECRETARY OF HEALTH AND HUMAN SERVICES

WASHINGTON, D.C. 20201

May 28, 2010

Lamar McKay  
Chairman and President  
BP America, Inc  
501 Westlake Park Boulevard  
Houston, TX 77079

Dear Mr. McKay:

We are all aware of the potentially serious health consequences of the Deepwater oil spill. There are already reports of fishermen and clean-up workers complaining of headaches, nausea, and breathing difficulties related to exposure to the oil and dispersants, and we have to be concerned about the future impact on public health in the region. BP must accept responsibility for the health consequences of this disaster.

The most immediate need is to ensure that those who have experienced adverse health effects or have been injured as a result of exposure to oil, heat, dispersants, and/or related chemicals, or simply as a result of their involvement in the response effort, receive appropriate clinical services. The Department of Health and Human Services (HHS) is working with state and local partners and members of Congress from this already medically underserved area to ensure that health care services, including mental health services, are available to those who need them.

It is also important to establish baseline and, potentially, ongoing assessments of health status to be prepared to identify any long-term health consequences of the spill. As you know, HHS, along with the Department of Labor, has already established a system to collect basic information to roster response workers involved in the clean-up effort. We need to build the strongest system possible and ensure it gathers the information needed to support any long-term studies that may become necessary.

I am committed to ensuring this effort is conducted responsibly, compassionately, and with absolute scientific integrity. I am asking BP to pay for it.

HHS and its partners across the federal government are taking the important steps outlined above so that we have a full and accurate accounting of the Deepwater oil spill's health impacts, can identify and prevent adverse health outcomes, and can ensure that those affected receive the care they need. We hope and expect to have your full cooperation, and we look forward to discussing this matter with you in greater detail in the coming days.

Sincerely,

Kathleen Sebelius