

## Boston proposes stringent regulations of biological laboratories

On 15 November 2005, Boston Mayor Thomas M. Menino asked the Boston Public Health Commission to enact new rules to ensure the safe operation of biological laboratories in the city of Boston<sup>1</sup>. The proposed rules cover research conducted in biosafety level 2, 3, and 4 laboratories and, if enacted, would be the most stringent local laboratory safety rules in the country.

“These labs are the engines of scientific discovery, producing breakthroughs that can prevent untold numbers of illnesses and disease. As the number of laboratories in the City increases and the need for their

activities grows, we need to assure our residents that every possible measure has been taken to ensure their safe operation,” Mayor Menino said in a press release<sup>1</sup>.

The proposed regulations will:

- “Strengthen and broaden responsibilities of laboratory Institutional Biosafety Committees;
- “Mandate public disclosure of high risk research;
- “Insure greater public involvement in regulatory oversight process;
- “Mandate regular on-site inspections;
- “Address the need for laboratory

involvement in emergency planning;

- “Establish standards for staff training, for safe operations and for effective security;
- “Establish ‘whistle blower’ protection for employees of labs<sup>1</sup>.”

A 60-day period for comments will end on 15 January 2006. The Boston Public Health Commission is expected to vote on a final regulation at its February 2006 meeting.

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1. Boston Public Health Commission. Media Release: Mayor Menino announces proposal for stringent new laboratory regulations. (15 November 2005). [http://www.bphc.org/news/press\\_release\\_content.asp?id=298](http://www.bphc.org/news/press_release_content.asp?id=298).