



DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH AND HUMAN SERVICES

Office of the Secretary

Assistant Secretary for Health
Office of Public Health and Science
Washington D.C. 20201

MAR 30 2005

Cristina - APR 19 2005

Thank you for your
note, and for the
great contributions of
the PHS officers!

The Honorable William Winkenwerder, Jr., M.D.
Assistant Secretary of Defense (Health Affairs)
1200 Defense Pentagon, Room 3E1082
Washington, DC 20301-1200

Dear Dr. Winkenwerder:

For the past several years, U.S. Public Health Service (USPHS) commissioned officers have trained alongside personnel from the Department of Defense to provide humanitarian relief following catastrophic natural or manmade disasters. In response to your request for support following the Asian tsunami, we put that training into action in Operation Unified Assistance. From the reports I have received, our officers and the U.S. Navy personnel aboard the USNS *Mercy* worked tirelessly as a truly unified team.

Each of us in the leadership of the USPHS Commissioned Corps is proud of the performance of the USPHS and USN officers and crew of the *Mercy*. We stand ready to respond whenever and wherever the Department of Defense requires personnel to provide support during public health emergencies. We welcome the opportunity to build upon this relationship through continued joint training and future deployments.

Sincerely yours,

Cristina V. Beato M.D.

Cristina V. Beato, M.D.
Acting Assistant Secretary for Health

cc: Secretary, DHHS
Chief of Staff, DHHS
Surgeon General, USPHS