



## DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH &amp; HUMAN SERVICES

Public Health Service

National Institutes of Health  
National Cancer Institute  
Bethesda, Maryland 20892

6120 Executive Blvd., EPB 6070  
(301) 495-1811  
FAX: (301) 402-3256  
E-Mail: fraumenj@mail.nih.gov

February 13, 2006

Mauricio Fabretti  
Deputy Attorney of Brazil  
Ministerio Publico Federal  
Procuradoria da Republica No Estado de Roraima  
Rua General Penha Brasil, # 1255  
CEP:69305 - 130  
Eoa Vista/RR  
Sao Francisco, Brazil

FAX: (95) 623 9387

Dear Mr. Fabretti:

On July 13, 2005 you wrote to Dr. Andrew C. von Eschenbach, Director, National Cancer Institute (NCI), to inquire about blood samples collected from the Yanomami Indians by Dr. James Neel, University of Michigan. On September 30, 2005, Dr. von Eschenbach replied that, to the best of his knowledge, there were no Yanomami specimens at NCI. This exchange recently came to my attention and I am writing to inform you that NCI does have samples that may be of interest to you. In the early 1990s, an investigator in the Division of Cancer Epidemiology and Genetics, Dr. Robert Biggar, was given a specimen collection from Dr. James Neel of the University of Michigan that included blood samples from Yanomami Indians in Venezuela and Brazil. Since our particular unit was not contacted last summer about your request, we did not have the opportunity to inform the NCI Director or you about the specimens.

The blood specimens were collected in the late 1960s/early 1970s by Dr. Neel and later given to Dr. Biggar because of his interest in viruses. The samples have been stored under careful control in freezers in our biorepository. Dr. Biggar was not involved in the field work led by Dr. Neel. However, Dr. Biggar used the samples for a paper entitled, "Endemic human T cell lymphotropic virus type II infection among isolated Brazilian Amerindians," *Journal of Infectious Diseases* 1992;166:100-7. No genetic studies have been done and DNA has not been amplified. The NCI research was restricted to viral antibody testing.

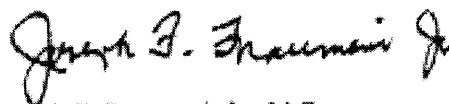
Dr. Biggar provided some of the Yanomami blood samples to Dr. Eugene O. Major, an investigator at the National Institute of Neurological Disorders and Stroke, NIH, and Dr. Neel,

Mr. Mauricio Fabretti  
Deputy Attorney of Brazil  
Page 2

who published a paper together entitled, "The JC and BK human polyoma viruses appear to be recent introductions to some South American Indian tribes: There is no serological evidence of cross-reactivity with the simian polyoma virus SV40," Proceedings of the National Academy of Sciences 1998: 95:15525-15530. There have been no other distributions of the Yanomami specimens.

We are willing to return the specimens to Yanomami representatives from Brazil and Venezuela. We are happy to work with you and Yanomami representatives from each country to arrange a safe and successful transfer. We apologize for the incorrect information sent to you in September, and look forward to working with you to preserve these valuable specimens from the Yanomami people.

Sincerely,



Joseph F. Fraumeni, Jr., M.D.

Director

Division of Cancer Epidemiology  
and Genetics