

NIOSH Docket office
Robert A. Taft Laboratories, M/S C34
4676 Columbia Parkway
Cincinnati, OH 45226

Re: NIOSH 104

Dear NIOSH

Thank you for your concern for participants within the horse racing industry and specifically, your focus on health issues as they pertain to jockeys. I appreciate your invitation to your meeting in Washington D.C. and hope that my participation in the discussion was appropriate and insightful. I would be happy to provide additional information on any topic discussed at the meeting or answer any specific questions you may have pertaining to jockeys and potential health risks.

I would like to briefly offer my thoughts on the discussions during the morning session. I don't wish to sound cynical, but there seemed to be a theme: "What the horse racing industry is doing to protect the participants (the horses) from injury (breakdowns) and how reducing horse injuries would systematically reduce jockey health hazards (jockey injury)." I hope during the afternoon session, NIOSH representatives realize industry representatives are missing the point. Although jockeys appreciate the industry attending to the stability of our equine athletes, and how it directly affects the jockeys, they are additionally concerned with how their daily procedures and living conditions effect their welfare and that of their families today, and in the future. Health risks such as lead exposure and weight reducing techniques are commonplace and affect the lives of participants prior to the actual threat of horse related injuries. There are also additional concerns such as overexposure to x-rays and long term effects of weight reduction and other abuses to the body that occur well after the race has ended.

Jockeys' representatives and others stated that jockeys sometimes fight controls that are in their own best interest and that additional safety equipment such as vests, helmets and reins should continue to be addressed as well as track issues such as synthetic surfaces and safety rails. As a jockey for over twenty years, and a regional representative of the Jockeys' Guild, I agree with industry representatives and the need to address the obvious daily hazards to jockeys and help them avoid potential injury. I hope they, and NIOSH agree that jockeys are exposed to other unforeseen hazards and appreciate the intervention.