Baby Doe Rules Issued

A new version of the controversial "Baby Doe" regulations has finally been issued by the Department of Health and Human Services (HHS).

The rules, which are based on Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act, are designed to protect the rights of defective newborns. They basically shift away from the earlier emphasis on federal intervention. Instead, they encourage hospitals to set up "infant care review committees" to be the first resort when inappropriate treatment is suspected. State child protective agencies are designated as backup resources, and HHS is only to be brought in as a last resort.

Medical groups are particularly pleased with the emphasis on review committees. But they—particularly the American Medical Association—continue to object to the application of Section 504 to complex medical decisions.

Advocates for the handicapped applaud the prominent role given child protective agencies, but fear that the review committees will be rubber stamps for doctors' decisions.

—CONSTANCE HOLDEN

Dole Promotes Patent Reform for Big Business

About a decade ago, the federal government concluded it was not a very good broker of patents and decided to assign patent rights for federally funded research to universities, nonprofit institutions, and small businesses. Under this arrangement, patents are more likely to be exploited, the government reasoned. Now Senator Robert J. Dole (R–Kans.) wants to give large businesses the same rights and has introduced a bill to do that. Hearings on the bill are to be held in mid-February.

The bill is likely to draw opposition on the grounds that the fruits of federally funded research should remain in the public domain. But given the current political environment and the success of the university-government arrangement, opposition to the proposal is not likely to be very persuasive.

An aide to Dole says that the "burden of proof is on the other side." According to the aide, 90 percent of the patents held by the government are never developed.—MARJORIE SUN

Ottinger, Nuclear Gadfly, to Quit Congress in 1984

Representative Richard L. Ottinger (D–N.Y.), an advocate of government-backed solar and energy conservation projects, surprised followers with his announcement on 6 January that he will be leaving Congress at the end of the term this fall. Ottinger, 54, is now serving his 16th year in Congress and is chairman of the conservation and power subcommittee of the House

Energy and Commerce Committee. A Democrat in a heavily Republican district, he has faced increasingly difficult election battles.

Ottinger decided to quit while "at the top of form and still young enough to start another career," he told his constituents in Westchester County. He has grown tired of 7-day work weeks and of the "incredible frustration of being in Congress and still feeling as powerless as the average citizen to affect the great issues before the country, like war and peace." He said, "I have long wanted to teach and write."

Ottinger led the House opposition to proposed cuts in the solar R & D budget in 1981 and 1982 and played an important role in the vote to end funding for the Clinch River breeder reactor. More recently, he has challenged the Administration's plans for a $10-billion gas centrifuge uranium enrichment plant in Portsmouth, Ohio (*Science*, 11 November 1983, p. 591).

—ELIOT MARSHALL

DOE Warned on Plans for Restarting Reactor

The Department of Energy's plans to restart an aged weapons reactor in South Carolina have come under surprisingly hostile fire from two other government agencies. The Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) and the Department of the Interior have each concluded that the restart could have serious environmental impacts, and Interior has even threatened to appeal to the White House Council on Environmental Quality if DOE does not make some costly modifications to the reactor.

DOE wants to restart the reactor, which has been mothballed since the late 1960's, to produce plutonium for use in nuclear weapons. It originally planned to start it up in October, after spending some $200 million on repairs and refurbishment. But in July Congress told DOE to produce a formal statement about the plant's impact on the environment before going ahead (*Science*, 22 July, p. 345). The negative assessments by EPA and Interior, which were made in comments on a draft of DOE's environmental impact statement, could add further delays.

The reaction to the draft environmental impact statement has already caused DOE to miss its deadline for publication of a final version. The department received 97 written comments, including those of EPA and Interior, and 47 oral statements at public hearings. As a result, the final impact statement, which was originally due in December, will now not be ready for several weeks.

EPA and Interior both argued that the reactor, which will produce plutonium for use in nuclear weapons, will destroy extensive wetlands near the plant by discharging hot water directly into a creek. They also contend that DOE has failed to produce sufficient assurance that the reactor operations will not contaminate ground water in the area. And finally, EPA has warned that the planned disposal of some hazardous wastes from the plant may violate federal toxic waste laws.

Interior said it could not support direct discharge of cooling water into the environment, and recommended that cooling towers be installed at the

plant. That would cost some $40 million and push back the start-up by 3 years. If DOE neither adds cooling towers nor "develops a plan to adequately mitigate for impacts to fish and wildlife resources, then the Department of the Interior may choose to refer this project to the Council on Environmental Quality," Interior warned.

DOE's plans have also come under fire from critics who have questioned the need for a rapid increase in plutonium production. For example, George Rathjens, professor of political science at MIT, said in comments on DOE's draft impact statement that anticipated plutonium requirements have been reduced because of recent decisions such as scaling back the MX program and cancellation of the Clinch River breeder reactor. "With these changes there is not likely to be any need for reactivation of the reactor in the near future, and possibly ever," he said.—**COLIN NORMAN**

For Some, NSF May Mean Non-Sufficient Funds

Changes in National Science Foundation (NSF) administration of research funds are producing unpleasant surprises for some grant applicants. New policies intended to meet criticism leveled in past years are apparently causing NSF to come up short on funding for some regular clients.

Since NSF spreads its grant awards over the fiscal year, which began on 1 October, NSF officials say that it is still too early for a detailed assessment. However, university sources cite several instances in which applicants have been given signals that their proposals would be funded and then informed that the money had run out.

The phenomenon appears to be most pronounced in the foundation's engineering directorate. NSF officials say that several factors have apparently combined to put special pressure on engineering grants this year.

- The number of applications for research grants in engineering increased substantially this year because of cutbacks on research funds in other agencies, notably the Department of Energy, creating what one official called "proposal pressure."
- Of the 200 new Presidential Young Investigators Awards to be made by NSF this year, 100 will be given by the engineering directorate. The awards are being initiated with the purpose of inducing promising young researchers to pursue university careers. Engineering schools have reported shortages of faculty as able graduates have increasingly chosen jobs in industry. The new awards typically amount to $50,000 a year. Total research funds available to the engineering directorate will be reduced by the amount required to fund the awards.
- Engineering is also affected by the general instructions to all NSF program managers and review committees from foundation director Edward A. Knapp to give more favorable treatment to requests for funds for instrumentation and research manpower in grant applications (*Science,* 2 December 1983, p. 990). NSF officials say that Knapp was reacting to a tendency within NSF in recent years to stretch grant funds by skimping on funds for instrumentation or research personnel on grants approved. Knapp, in effect, told program managers that if a proposal is a good one and the requests for instrumentation and personnel are justified, the grant should be set at a level high enough to finance them. The likely result of making larger grants is that the total number of grants awarded will decline despite an increase in research funds well above inflation for NSF.

The research budget for the engineering directorate amounts to about $120 million this year, up from about $101 million last year. The average grant in engineering was some $62,500 in 1983. NSF's acting assistant director for engineering, Carl W. Hall, says that no accurate estimate on average size of grants this year can be made at this point, but that an increase of 10 percent on average would not be surprising.

The coincidence of a higher number of applications, initiation of the new blood awards, the trend toward larger grants, and perhaps a desire on the part of NSF management to venture into new areas of research seem to be falling most heavily on senior investigators, including those with long relationships as principal investigators for NSF, who are unlikely to take disappointment docilely.—**JOHN WALSH**

Carnegie Plan Promotes Prevention of Nuclear War

The Carnegie Corporation plans to spend $5 million to $7 million annually on a new program devoted to the prevention of nuclear war. The money, which will be awarded as grants, is believed to be the largest expenditure by a nonprofit institution for this purpose.

The program is intended to promote the sharing of information among weapons experts, political and behavioral scientists, and policy analysts within and outside government. According to Avery Russell, public affairs director at Carnegie, specific uses for a major portion of the money are still under discussion.

The program, however, has already awarded grants to Stanford and Harvard. In December, Stanford's Center for International Security and Arms Control received a $906,000, 4-year grant. The money will be used to support two or three fellowships annually for midcareer scientists interested in arms control and to fund a project on the management of potential crises between the United States and the Soviet Union. Harvard's John F. Kennedy School of Government received a $494,000, 1-year grant in June that will be used to host interdisciplinary seminars on ways to reduce the risk of nuclear war and support research on the topic.

Russell said that the program arose in part from a desire to support experts who, on their own time, have been working on nuclear arms issues. The experts "have been doing this avocationally. We're trying to pay them in their off time. We want to bring the best talent to this overriding concern," Russell said.

Carnegie is undertaking the new program after its endowment did particularly well in the stock market last year, raising its pool of available grants from $13 million in 1983 to $20 million in 1984. The new program is headed by Frederick Mosher, a 20-year veteran of the Carnegie, and is one of several initiatives being made by David A. Hamburg, who became president about a year ago. In the past, the foundation has focused primarily on education and social justice.

—**MARJORIE SUN**