



Centers for Disease Control
and Prevention (CDC)
Atlanta GA 30333

NOV 25 2009

The Honorable Kurt Schrader
House of Representatives
Washington, D.C. 20515

Dear Mr. Schrader:

I am responding to your letter to Ms. Barbara Clark, Acting Assistant Secretary for Legislation of the Department of Health and Human Services, on behalf of your constituent, Mr. Kenneth Boorum, regarding *Blastocystis hominis* infection. Ms. Clark has asked me to respond directly to you. Please excuse the delay of this response.

Mr. Boorum, who represents the Blastocystis Research Foundation, previously raised his concerns regarding *Blastocystis hominis* infection with the former and acting directors of the National Center for Zoonotic, Vector-Borne, and Enteric Diseases at the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC).

CDC recognizes that *B. hominis* is a common microscopic organism, now believed to represent an unusual fungal form, found throughout the world. However, experts disagree on whether *B. hominis* is a pathogen, and as such, the primary cause of symptoms, because it is often found with other parasitic organisms, bacteria, or viruses. Drugs are available by prescription to treat *B. hominis* infection, although medication is not always effective in relieving symptoms.

We will continue to follow with great interest the growing body of peer-reviewed literature on both the pathogenicity and treatment options for this organism. Our advice to public health laboratories and physicians will continue to evolve as more data and information is available from published studies that can help guide our messages.

We appreciate your interest in this important public health matter and hope this information is helpful in responding to Mr. Boorum.

Sincerely,

Thomas R. Frieden, M.D., M.P.H.
Director, CDC, and
Administrator, Agency for Toxic
Substances and Disease Registry