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On October 29, 2015, the White House released a memorandum regarding the next steps to enhance and strengthen oversight of biosafety and biosecurity in the United States. This memorandum, from Lisa Monaco, Assistant to the President for Homeland Security and Counterterrorism and Deputy National Security Advisor, and Dr. John Holdren, Assistant to the President for Science and Technology and Director of the White House Office of Science and Technology Policy, describes specific recommendations compiled from federal and broad stakeholder reviews. In addition, implementation plans and timelines have been developed to address these recommendations in a timely manner. The full report can be reviewed via the link below:

<https://www.whitehouse.gov/blog/2015/10/29/national-biosafety-and-biosecurity-system-united-states>

ABSA International fully supports this worthwhile discussion and has actively participated in multiple aspects of this review through invitations to leadership and involvement of the membership. Representatives of ABSA presented recommendations to the Federal Experts Security Advisory Panel as well as participated in the White House Office of Science and Technology Policy listening sessions. Many proposals made by ABSA International were incorporated into the recommendations. For example: accreditation of laboratories; credentialed biosafety professionals; oversight/organizational governance structure in place; consistent inspections/ timely reporting; institutional inventory for all biological agents and toxins; anonymous reporting of all lab exposures; and creating a culture of safety. Currently, ABSA International is in the process of comprehensively reviewing the reports and formulating recommendations. ABSA will continue to work with the federal agencies as the implementation plan moves forward to help create a thorough, robust, and engrained culture of safety that supports good, sound, biosafety practices and transparency in not only select agent laboratories but all biological laboratories.