

NO PLACE TO HIDE\*

An open letter to Boston Mayor Thomas Menino, Boston City Councilors,  
And Boston University Trustees

We, the undersigned scientists, physicians, public health specialists, and academics oppose the construction of a Level 4 Biological Research Laboratory in the South End/Roxbury area of Boston near the Boston Medical Center. Research in this high security laboratory – the first proposed for such a densely populated urban area – will involve work with some of the most dangerous biological organisms, viruses and toxins that can cause deadly diseases for which there are no known cures, such as anthrax, Ebola, and small pox.

High level safety and security procedures will be installed. However, there can be no guarantees that there will be no accidents that might lead to the release of deadly, air-borne pathogens through the failure of safety systems or when they are transported through city streets. The laboratory might also become a target for intentional acts of violence.

Because of new federal laws, there may be no public oversight of research at the laboratory, much of which could be classified, and the public may not be informed of accidents if they should occur. In addition, through its high security presence and the heavy increase in traffic and air pollution, this facility will have a negative impact on the quality of life in the surrounding residential neighborhood and its relationship to the medical campus and hospital.

For all these reasons, this type of Level 4 laboratory should not be located in this densely populated urban area: there are 50, 000 people within one mile and more than one million within ten miles of the proposed site. There are real and potentially catastrophic risks to the health and safety of people in the local and surrounding communities. We, therefore, request that Boston University withdraw its plans to build this laboratory and that the Mayor and Councilors of the City of Boston take steps to ensure that such high-risk facilities not be constructed in Boston.

\*A campaign of Safety Net and ACE (Alternatives for Community & Environment) with the support of UJP (United for Justice with Peace).

For further information: [www.ace-ej.org](http://www.ace-ej.org).

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\*As of 4/20/04;  
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