

Let's Boycott Henry Schein Inc.

Consumers for Dental Choice announces a boycott of Henry Schein Inc., the dental and medical products colossus whose fingerprints are all over the callous FDA mercury amalgam rule. We ask all dentists of integrity -- indeed, we ask all health professionals of integrity worldwide -- to stop buying ANY PRODUCT from or through Schein UNTIL Schein announces it will cease selling mercury amalgam.

Our boycott aims to persuade Schein to change its ways -- to stop marketing a product that is 50% mercury when other filling materials are interchangeable. According to a 2007 report by Bank of America Securities, the switch to exclusive reliance on resin and other alternatives won't hurt its profits. As such, ours is a boycott not with an economic goal but with a policy goal: an end to amalgam. Everyone can win!

We must boycott because Schein is the #1 seller of a highly toxic product, a 19th century device with no place in modern dentistry. It has caused and continues to cause untold human misery, and is a particular neurological risk to children and unborn children. Its mercury is an environmental menace, poisoning other creatures who co-habit this earth with us. The vapor is proven harmful to professionals and workers in the dental workplace. Amalgam is a social injustice, still given to working families, soldiers, children with disabilities, etc. -- but no longer to America's elite.

We must boycott because FDA Commissioner Margaret Hamburg came through the revolving door from Schein, and this coziness with corporations resulted in the amalgam rule that is "more responsive to industry than human health" according to an FDA employee. And the chumminess continues -- two days after the amalgam rule was announced, Commissioner Hamburg assured company officials that her "friendships" at Schein "will outlast the period of my recusal." Then Schein's general counsel wrote Hamburg to thank her for her work at FDA: "We are indebted to you for your service to our country." Four days later, Schein CEO Stanley Bergman -- who had paid Hamburg a quarter million dollars a year for the light work of being a corporate director -- bragged to investors about his company's ties to FDA Commissioner Hamburg months after she left the board, thanking Hamburg for her "insight" to the board "throughout the years." In light of this revolving door relationship, do we face the specter of Hamburg approving a spate of dangerous products -- with no consumer warnings, with no consumer disclosures?

Folks, we have one thing that this unholy alliance of corporate America, Wall Street, and FDA leadership can only get if we hand it to them: our dollars (and for our friends around the world, our euros, yen, pounds, cruzeiros, etc.) We can spend our money blindly or we can spend our money wisely.

Health professionals, please boycott Henry Schein. Please tell Schein salespeople that the company has an easy way to end this boycott: stop selling amalgam. Consumers, please ask your dentists, physicians, and other health practitioners to boycott Henry Schein.

Charlie Brown
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PS: In a couple of days, I will circulate to dentists and other health professionals a draft letter to Schein that announces support for the boycott, and will ask that that you add your name to it.

PPS--I am informed that some dentists have long-term contracts with Schein; we are not asking that you break any existing contract, and understand that you can't participate. We hope that dentists will look to other distributors for long-term contracts.

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