

## Consumers for Dental Choice

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Joel Seligman, President and CEO  
University of Rochester  
Rochester, NY 14627 – *via mail and e-mail seligman@rochester.edu*

Re: Stop spending federal money on \$3 million sham dental mercury project:

- Grant to handpicked dentist at U.R. continues pattern of corruption by Director of the National Institute of Dental and Craniofacial Research (NIDCR);
- Dentist Watson not qualified to run neurological study;
- Dentist Watson using biased methodology aimed at ratifying NIDCR's endorsement of continued use of mercury in dentistry

Dear President Seligman:

We have filed the attached complaint with the United States Inspector General, asking that the \$3 million “independent” study on mercury amalgam by your University be stopped at once, for reasons amply explained therein.

For a third time, Lawrence Tabak, director of NIDCR (the dental arm of the National Institutes of Health), is engaged in shoveling millions of taxpayers' dollars to a colleague, not to a neurologist, to write a report trumpeting his publicly-proclaimed goal of continued use of mercury in dentistry.

In its grant announcement, the University of Rochester is flat wrong to proclaim that this study is *sui generis*, as studies repeatedly (and not surprisingly) show that mercury implanted an inch from a child's brain is a health risk and that dental workers are at risk working with mercury, just as industrial workers are. In that announcement, too, the University is flat wrong to claim the public knows about the mercury in amalgam; as a Zogby poll notes, three-fourths of the public does not know the main component of amalgam. This absence of consumer knowledge is due solely to the cover-up policies of organized dentistry: the ADA's gag rule on dentists and the invention and use of the deceptive term “silver fillings.” The University is thus complicit in spreading false information about the basis for this study and for its value to science. Indeed, if the goal was scientific advancement, the University would have insisted that a toxicologist or neurologist be in charge, instead of letting NIDCR handpick junior dental school professor Gene Watson.

Since a methodology that a neurologist or toxicologist would use will likely show the health damage from mercury exposure, Dr. Watson is instead using a flawed methodology, one aimed at getting a result favorable to the Tabak/American Dental Association position that mercury implanted by dentists an inch from a child's brain is safe (even though mercury is universally recognized as a neurological risk in other exposures). Whether it was Tabak's insistence or Watson's choice to use this methodology, both by now know only one pre-ordained result will permit Dr. Watson to get more fat NIDCR “research” contracts, and for him to move up the dental school promotion ladder: *to wit*, ratify the pro-amalgam position avidly promoted by Tabak and his “research” dollars.

President Seligman, it is in the public interest, the taxpayers' interest, and the interest of your university's great reputation that you immediately order the cessation of spending or receiving any more federal money on this project, and that you suspend this research pending this investigation.

Sincerely,

Charles G. Brown  
National Counsel  
28 November 2007

Enclosure: Complaint to Inspector-General

cc--The Inspector General, Department of Health and Human Services  
cc--Domestic Policy Subcommittee, Oversight and Government Reform Committee, House of Representatives  
cc--Sue Stewart, Senior Vice President and University Counsel, *via mail and e-mail*,  
*sue.stewart@rochester.edu*  
cc--Gene Watson, DDS, University of Rochester Dental School