

Consumers for Dental Choice

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Elias H. Zerhouni, M.D., Director
National Institutes of Health
1 Center Drive, MSC 0148 (Room 126)
Bethesda, MD 20892-0148 *via e-mail, ZerhounE@mail.nih.gov, and by priority mail*

Re: Stop Tabak's Pattern of Corruption: Block the Millions Going to the University of Rochester Where a Dentist Is in Charge of a Flawed Neurological Study

Dear Director Zerhouni:

Attached is our complaint to the Inspector General about the pattern of corruption at NIDCR. Lawrence Tabak repeatedly is funneling millions of "research" dollars to handpicked dentist colleagues or tobacco consultants to ratify his agenda to protect the marketing of a 19th century relic, mercury amalgam.

The latest such taxpayer scam is now in progress. As explained, Tabak has begun to shovel \$3 million to a dentist colleague to do a neurological study on the health risks of mercury amalgam. The methodology – hair samples of fish-eating children – is fundamentally flawed, and is being done so Tabak, once again, may do a press announcement that when his fellow dentists expose children, pregnant women, and dental workers to mercury, it is perfectly acceptable.

In the first of Tabak's pattern of corruption – Tabak handpicking an unqualified meetings planning company and a tobacco consultant (after a series of secret meetings outlining the desired result) to do a literature review – you commissioned a national CPA firm, Clifton Gunderson, to investigate. That report was completed in 2005, and has since been covered up by NIH – perhaps at your instructions, or perhaps totally unknown to you. When presented to NIH by Clifton Gunderson, according to our first FOIA request, it was in the possession of Suzanne Servis, who was "editing" it; we don't know why an independent report should be edited. Because Tabak trumpets the LSRO-BETAH "study" as part of his pro-amalgam propaganda, it is outrageous that NIH has chosen to cover up a report that likely shows wrongdoing at that Institute on this issue.

In the second of Tabak's pattern of corruption, the mercury experiment on Latin institutionalized children – led by dental school professors who testified in favor of the safety of mercury fillings before analyzing the data and who withheld unfavorable data from the result – the Office of Human Research Protections found the researchers so immoral they never gave informed consent about the adverse health effects of mercury exposure. The Portuguese Government has been notified of the contemptuous attitude of Tabak and his researchers toward these orphans and their health. We have written you twice about this matter, asking that you fire Tabak.

Despite warnings to you, Tabak's pattern of corruption continued for a third time this year. Tabak is shoveling \$3 million to a junior dental school professor at a school which supports the use of mercury fillings – to opine on neurological risk of dental mercury to (mercury-laden) fish-eating children. The dentist is not qualified to do the

study. He has chosen (or perhaps Tabak dictated) a flawed methodology that will cover up neurological damage and allow him to submit a report to ratify Tabak's position – and keep him eligible for more Tabak grants.

It is a taxpayer outrage, and worse, it is part of Tabak's propaganda campaign to keep mercury fillings on the market devoid of government-funded objective studies. Mercury fillings are no longer needed for oral health care; their sole rationale today is dentist convenience and dentist profits. Using his enormous power of the purse and the bully pulpit going with his title, Tabak focuses on protecting dentist economics, rather than protecting children from mercury exposure from those dentists.

Using a dentist and not a neurologist, using a sham methodology based on hair samples, this fraud on the taxpayers at the University of Rochester has commenced. You can stop the funding of it, if you want. We ask you, sir, in the interest of science, in the interest of taxpayers, in the interest of children, to countermand Tabak and stop the funding of this "research," now.

Since we have made repeated warnings to you, to Deputy Director Kington, to Deputy Director Norka-Bravo, and to OMA Director Servis, Tabak must now believe he has *carte blanche* from the four of you to do anything he wants with "his" research money. Surely you know that mercury is a serious neurotoxin that can permanently injure the fetus and the child's developing brain; its properties are not magically transformed by dentists.

Senator Lautenberg asked you several years ago to take control of research on mercury amalgam away from NIDCR and give it to an Institute run by toxicologists and which had no built-in conflict of interest, such as NIEHS. You refused. As a result, Tabak repeats his pattern of conduct, wasting millions of dollars and not getting any objective and useful scientific research done.

Professional courtesy between a physician and a dentist must have limits. Perhaps you, Director Zerhouni, will step in and stop Tabak from his outrageous and illegal handouts of federal dollars to unqualified and biased colleagues, with pre-ordained results, so he can protect mercury fillings from scientific scrutiny. Perhaps, too, this third episode will cause NIH's front office to stop protecting their colleague Tabak, for example, for Ms. Servis to stop blocking an unedited version of the Clifton Gunderson report.

We urge you (1) to reconsider your hand-off approach to Lawrence Tabak and these rogue operations, (2) to move amalgam research from NIDCR to NIEHS, and (3) to stop the funding of the Rochester taxpayer scam.

Sincerely,

Charles G. Brown
National Counsel
28 November 2007

(cc's on page three)

cc (via *e-mail and priority mail*): Raynard S. Kington, Deputy Director; Norka Ruiz Bravo, Deputy Director for Extramural Research; Suzanne J. Servis, Director, O.M.A.; Ann Brewer, Director- Executive Secretariat; Marin Allen, Deputy Director, and John Burklow, Associate Director, Communications

cc: The Inspector-General

cc, at the U.S. House of Representatives: Chairman Dennis Kucinich, Domestic Policy Subcommittee, via Jaron Bourke; Congresswoman Diane Watson, via Valerie Van Buren; Congressman Dan Burton, via Brian Fauls.