

Mercury in Vaccines and Other Drugs Challenged

On August 24, 2007, representatives of the Coalition for Mercury-free Drugs (CoMeD), a grassroots advocacy organization, delivered a 472 page 'citizen petition' (see 21 CFR Sec. 10.30 [<http://www.accessdata.fda.gov/scripts/cdrh/cfdocs/cfcfr/cfrsearch.cfm>]) to the Food and Drug Administration (FDA), seeking a recall and ban of mercury-containing drugs not proven safe. A citizen petition enables the public to pursue a review of any aspect of FDA policy. By rule, the FDA has 180 days to respond. CoMeD, citing: federal laws, regulations, case law, and legal precedent, is seeking to protect the public health, especially the health of unborn and young children.

Through previous CoMeD efforts, the FDA disclosed that more than forty prescription and over-the-counter drug products still contain levels of mercury not proven safe. Defending the use of this known neurotoxin, Assistant Commissioner for Policy, Dr. Jeffrey Shuren argued that "safety is relative, rather than absolute." Even more alarming, he admitted FDA has no proof of safety for mercury-containing drugs.

Resolved to challenge the FDA, the members of CoMeD filed a citizen petition that the FDA assigned Docket # 2007P-0331. This CoMeD petition also documents the history of Thimerosal, the mercury-based "preservative" still in the flu shot and various other drugs. The only human safety study using Thimerosal was conducted in 1929 on 22 patients with meningitis. After receiving huge quantities of mercury from Thimerosal preparations, all the patients died, most within a few days. Nonetheless, Thimerosal was declared safe for human administration, even as the medical community raised alarms.

Along with the CoMeD Citizen Petition, the FDA will consider comments submitted by the general public to Docket #2007P-0331. Those advocating for safer/mercury-free vaccines and other drugs may submit comments to the FDA Docket. A copy of the citizen petition, other documents and the instructions on how to make a comment to this petition may be found at the CoMeD website: www.mercury-freedrugs.org.