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Parents, Children Score Victory with Passage of Weldon Safe Vaccine Amendment

House Committee Approves Measure to Remove Mercury from Children's Flu Shots

Washington, Jul 11 - The House Appropriations Committee today approved an amendment by U.S. Rep. Dave Weldon, M.D. (R-FL) that prevents any taxpayer money from being used to administer mercury-laced flu shots to children under three-years of age. Added to a must-pass Labor Health and Human Services spending bill, Weldon's measure would take effect for the 2008-2009 flu season, ensuring that 2007/2008 flu vaccination stockpiles will be adequate.



Weldon Introduces Vaccine Safety Legislation

"Today's vote is a victory for the health and safety of our youngest children," said Weldon, who's been a long-time congressional leader on vaccine-safety related issues. "Years of encouraging the CDC, vaccine manufacturers, and public health officials to completely remove mercury from all children's vaccines have failed. Adequately funding the increase of mercury-free flu vaccines seems the only way to guarantee what is long overdue and easily done."

In 1999, the Public Health Service, the American Academy of Pediatrics, and vaccine manufacturers adopted a policy to remove thimerosal, a mercury compound, from child vaccines. Though thimerosal has been removed from all other routinely administered vaccines, the compound (50% mercury) still remains in childhood flu shots. Over the past two years, the CDC has significantly expanded the pediatric flu vaccine recommendations, resulting in broader exposure of infants and children to mercury.

Mercury is a neurotoxin and is harmful to the developing central nervous system of fetuses and infants. The EPA found that 1-in-6 infants are born with a blood mercury level exceeding the level considered safe by the EPA.

"The last thing we should be doing is injecting these infants with mercury," stated Weldon. Earlier this year, Weldon and Rep. Carolyn Maloney (D-NY) introduced bipartisan legislation, the Mercury Free Vaccines Act of 2007. Among other things, that bill would phase out the use of all mercury containing vaccines for pregnant mothers and infants by the 2008-2009 flu season.

"Today's amendment by Congressman Weldon is a great accomplishment and brings us closer to finally getting mercury out of 'all' vaccines," said Congresswoman Carolyn Maloney (D-NY).

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