

**Congress of the United States**  
**House of Representatives**  
**Washington, D.C. 20515**

March 14, 2003

The Honorable Tommy G. Thompson  
Secretary of Health and Human Services  
U.S. Department of Health and Human Services  
200 Independence Avenue, SW  
Washington, DC 20201

Dear Mr. Secretary:

We are writing to urge the Department of Health and Human Services to promptly revise the National Cancer Institute (NCI) information sheet "Early Reproductive Events and Breast Cancer" in light of the conclusions reached at the recent NCI workshop on this topic. Since both scientific evidence and expert opinion agree that there is no association between induced abortions and breast cancer, it is time to stop providing misleading information to the public.

As you are aware, 12 House members originally wrote you on October 21, 2002 to protest the removal of scientific information from an NCI fact sheet and to inquire why it had been removed.<sup>1</sup> The original fact sheet — after a detailed discussion of the scientific data — concluded that there was no association between abortion and breast cancer. The new fact sheet, however, simplistically concluded that "the data have been inconsistent."<sup>2</sup> This alteration was surprising, given that no new scientific information had emerged to support the removal of this important information.

In your response of November 27, 2002, you replied:

Scientific information that we provide to the public must be the best available. That is why it has been made clear to all top Department officials that they need to continually assess the information they disseminate to the public to ensure it reflects the latest and best scientific data available.<sup>3</sup>

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<sup>1</sup>Letter from Rep. Henry A. Waxman et al. to Secretary of Health and Human Services Tommy G. Thompson (Oct. 21, 2002).

<sup>2</sup>National Cancer Institute, *Early Reproductive Events and Breast Cancer* (Nov. 25, 2002) (online at [http://www.house.gov/reform/min/inves\\_admin/admin\\_hhs\\_info.htm](http://www.house.gov/reform/min/inves_admin/admin_hhs_info.htm)).

<sup>3</sup>Letter from Secretary of Health and Human Services Tommy G. Thompson to Rep. Henry A. Waxman (Nov. 27, 2002).

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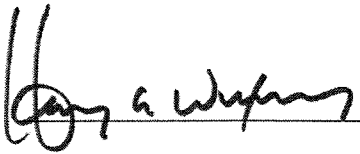
Recent events should help clear up any possible confusion. NCI hosted a forum on this topic from February 24 to 26, in which experts from around the world provided testimony on the associations between early reproductive events (abortions, miscarriages and pregnancy) and breast cancer. The experts analyzed the existing evidence, presented new evidence, and developed a report that summarized their findings.

This report, delivered to the chair of the NCI on March 3 and posted on the NCI website in summary form on March 4, concluded that there is no association between induced abortions and breast cancer. The report also stated that this conclusion was backed by Level 1 evidence. Level 1 means that the evidence is "Well Established." It is the highest rating that can be given.<sup>4</sup>

Despite the conclusion of this NCI sponsored meeting, the misleading NCI fact sheet still remains on the web site. We urge you to rectify this situation. The current NCI fact sheet should be removed immediately, and a corrected fact sheet should be posted as soon as possible.

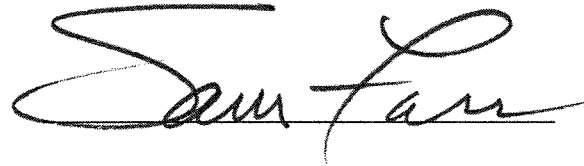
Please respond to this letter by sending a copy of a new fact sheet on abortion and breast cancer no later than March 28, 2003. Thank you very much.

Signed,

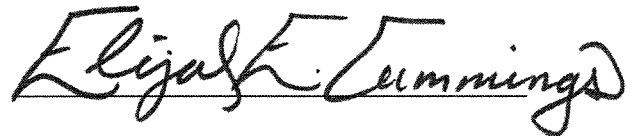
  
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<sup>4</sup>National Cancer Institute, *Summary Report: Early Reproductive Events and Breast Cancer* (Mar. 4, 2003) (online at <http://www.cancer.gov/cancerinfo/ere-workshop-report>).

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