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September 16, 2008

COL Reneta J.M. Engler, MD, Director  
Vaccine Healthcare Centers Network  
Headquarters  
2460 Linden Ln  
Building 161, Suite 10  
Silver Spring, MD 20910

Dear Colonel Engler,

I write to you regarding the issues raised by your recent report (copy enclosed) that indicates there may be significant numbers of military servicemembers who have suffered serious adverse events due to mandatory immunizations. The Department of Defense's Vaccine Healthcare Center (VHC) 2007 presentation on vaccine safety raises serious questions concerning the potential for vaccine-related health risks and disabilities among servicemembers and their beneficiaries.

Given the scope and size of the United States military's immunization programs, the data in this presentation is most compelling not only in its implications for military servicemembers and their families but for the American public at large. In order to clarify some of the issues raised by this report, I ask that you respond to the following questions:

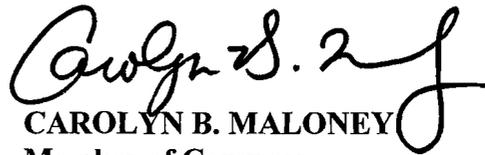
- What exactly were the serious adverse events found in the military population? What were the incidence rates of each?
- Does the 1-2% rate of serious adverse events referenced on the third slide of the presentation apply only to servicemembers or is the rate the same for all DoD personnel and their beneficiaries who receive immunizations? If the rate is lower for DoD personnel and beneficiaries, what would account for the difference?
- A statistic provided on the third slide of VHC's report indicates that 24,000-48,000 servicemembers have suffered serious adverse events due to mandatory immunizations. Is this accurate?
- Of the servicemembers who have suffered serious adverse events, how many did not return to active duty or reserve assignments? What impact, if any, is this having on military readiness?

- The report indicates (slides three, seven, and eighteen) that a possible risk factor in acquiring a serious adverse event is the administration of “multiple vaccines.” What data does VHC have to support this? How does the administration of “complex immunization exposures” potentially effect the rate of serious adverse events?

The questions raised by Vaccine Healthcare Center’s presentation deserve immediate attention by the Department of Defense. Given the ongoing debate among parents and the medical establishment about the safe use of vaccines and the current vaccine schedule, it is likely that everyone, military and civilian, will benefit from additional information and understanding of the outcomes of this study.

Thank you in advance for your prompt attention to these issues. I look forward to your response.

Sincerely,



CAROLYN B. MALONEY  
Member of Congress