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Honorable Bart Stupak
Chairman, House Subcommittee on Oversight and Investigations
2352 Rayburn House Office Building
Washington, D.C. 20515-4735

Dear Congressman Stupak:

I am writing to you about the following matter because you are now the Chairman of the House Subcommittee on Oversight and Investigations, and because I am familiar with your deep concern for the problems that involve mental health. I am urgently asking that your committee look into a matter that has brought great shock to many of us in the mental health field.

The pharmaceutical company Eli Lilly, which produces an anti-psychotic drug which goes under the trade name Zyprexa was found to have withheld research, completed by their own company, which found that the drug causes excessive cases of diabetes, obesity, and several other life-threatening ailments. Since the drug's approval by the FDA in 1996, Zyprexa has been prescribed to about 20 million people worldwide, and is by far, the company's biggest seller, accounting for 30% of the company's total revenues for 2005, or \$4.2 billion. The information was exposed as the result of a lawsuit and the drug company is maintaining that the results of their testing are proprietary and should not be released to the public, even though that information will save lives. When the drug was approved by the FDA, these results, which the company knew, were not handed over because the drug would not have been approved. Withholding that information has cost the lives of many U.S. citizens and has resulted in thousands more becoming diabetic or developing tardive dyskinesia or obesity, with all its secondary problems. The company's files show that the manufacturer not only hid vital information about the drug's safety from patients taking the drug, but also from the physicians who wrote prescriptions for it. The extremely high incidence of obesity and diabetes in those taking Zyprexa (olanzapine) was clearly apparent to Lilly researchers during phase III clinical trials and before, during the early and mid-1990s. Eli Lilly has settled numerous lawsuits over this drug for around \$700 million, a small price to pay for their profits on the drug of over \$4 billion each year. Yet they are still able to keep their vital research hidden and protected by the courts and the FDA does nothing. In my moral code, I would consider this kind of treachery a deliberate act of homicide based on nothing more than greed. Please keep in mind that independent studies have shown that the older anti-psychotic drugs produce the same results without these deadly side effects. They are also much cheaper. As far as I know, the company continues to suppress this information and is pressuring the court system to prosecute anyone who exposes this information publicly, even though it appeared on the front page of the Sunday New York Times last month.

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I am asking that your office begin the steps needed for a complete House investigation into this before more people die from this drug. I would also be interested in knowing if the federal government is planning to prosecute those in the drug company who withheld this vital information from the public and just knowingly sat back and watched people die so that they could gain a substantial profit. I understand that there are now criminal investigations ongoing in New York, Florida, Pennsylvania, Illinois, and Vermont, and other states are looking into this, regarding accusations that Eli Lilly illegally and aggressively marketed Zyprexa for unapproved uses, resulting in hundreds of millions of dollars in additional costs for people, insurance companies, Medicaid, and Medicare (our tax dollars). Unfortunately, as all this goes on, our FDA does nothing but defend the drug companies.

Because this material was exposed in the New York Times, even the president of the American Psychiatric Association, Pedro Ruiz, M.D., a firm supporter of the pharmaceutical industry, felt impelled to write a letter to the New York Times in which he said: "Physicians and patients need as much information as possible about the risks and benefits of medications. America needs an open, mandatory, public database of all clinical trials now."

In my discussions with many professionals, I have come to realize that people now see the pharmaceutical companies in this country as more villainous than the oil companies and any legislator who tackles this issue will be considered heroic by the majority of Americans. I am calling upon you to begin this endeavor for the safety and well being of the American consumer. I also certainly recognize the political power of the pharmaceutical industry on both sides of the aisle and the bravery that is needed to question what they are doing. My feeling is that if anyone can rise above this, it is you. If your office pursues this investigation, I and many of my colleagues would be glad to supply your office with the names of people who can speak directly to these issues.

I hope to hear from your office regarding any help that I can provide. I am writing this not only as a professional psychologist who has been in practice for over thirty years, but also as a citizen who is outraged by this criminal behavior on the part of those responsible parties in this drug company.

Sincerely,

Lloyd Ross, Ph.D., FACAPP.