



## FDA SCIENTISTS REVEAL INTERFERENCE WITH SCIENCE BASED DECISION MAKING AT THE AGENCY

UCS Survey Documents Political Pressures Effect Public Health Decisions

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Washington D.C. - A study released today by The Union of Concerned Scientists (UCS) revealed that nearly 18% of the 997 U. S. Food and Drug Administration (FDA) scientists who responded to the survey reportedly say they "have been asked, for non-scientific reasons, to inappropriately exclude or alter technical information or their conclusions in a FDA scientific document." Further, 61% knew of instances where "Department of Health and Human Services or FDA political appointees have inappropriately injected themselves into FDA determinations or actions."

"We need to support these scientists who have spoken out through this survey expressing serious concerns regarding the credibility and independence of the agency" said Dr. Susan F. Wood, Research Professor at George Washington University School of Public Health and Health Services, who resigned last August over the FDA's refusal to grant Plan B emergency contraception OTC status. "The scientific staff is struggling to do their jobs properly and steps need to be taken to restore science-based decision making at the FDA."

These findings constitute yet another blow to the already weakened integrity of the FDA, an agency which is still without a permanent commissioner due in part to the blatant politicization around the Plan B, emergency contraceptive over the counter approval.

As the nomination for Dr. Andrew von Eschenbach, Acting FDA Commissioner, is still halted, Reproductive Health Technologies Project calls on Congress to stand behind the FDA's scientists and appoint a commissioner that puts science before politics.

"Nearly 25 cents of every consumer dollar is spent on products regulated by the FDA. Congress needs to conform a Commissioner who is committed to standing behind the science of Plan B," said Kirsten Moore, President and CEO of the Reproductive Health Technologies Project. "By continuing to deny women timely access to this safe backup birth control method, the FDA is undermining its own public health mission – a danger clearly validated by these survey findings."

For more information on Dr. Susan Wood and restoring scientific integrity at the FDA, please visit <http://www.sciencebeforepolitics.com>.

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