



Without Harm

the campaign for
environmentally responsible
health care

CAMPAIGN HEADQUARTERS

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February 10, 2009

Mr. Per M. Bakken
Head, UNEP Chemicals Branch
DTIE
11-13, chemin des Anemones
CH-1219 Chatelaine, Geneva
Switzerland
Via email

Dear Mr. Bakken,

This letter is to confirm Health Care Without Harm's ongoing participation in the UNEP Mercury Partnership Programme.

As you know, HCWH has worked for more than a decade in the US, Europe, Asia, Africa and Latin America organizing the health care sector to substitute mercury-based medical devices for safer, accurate, affordable alternatives. For the past three years, much to our pleasure, we have been able to undertake a good deal of this work in conjunction with the UNEP mercury partnership programme. We believe we have had a great deal of success and are now witnessing a growing number of countries moving toward mercury-free health care.

Recently, as the next step in this effort, we launched an initiative with the World Health Organization based on the 2005 WHO Policy Paper which calls for short, medium and long-term steps to achieve the gradual substitution of mercury-based medical devices and grounded in Health Care Without Harm's ongoing efforts in this field.

This initiative has been forged as a component of the UNEP Mercury Products Partnership, led by the US Environmental Protection Agency. Specifically the WHO/HCWH Global Initiative to substitute mercury-based medical devices is focused on achieving the following objective in the Products Partnership business plan:

By 2017, to phase out the demand for mercury-containing fever thermometers and sphygmomanometers by at least 70% and to shift the production of all mercury-containing fever thermometers and sphygmomanometers to accurate, affordable, and safer non-mercury alternatives.

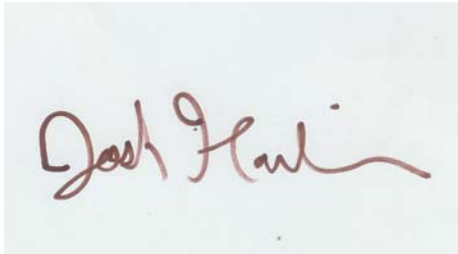
In order to achieve this objective, WHO and HCWH have agreed to work together to pursue the following strategies:

1. Establish an international mechanism to certify the accuracy and efficacy of mercury-free alternative medical devices.
2. Continue to expand awareness raising and mobilization of the health care sector in all countries, including actors involved in health care emergency responses, in order to shift demand towards alternative devices and educate societies as to the broader impacts of mercury.
3. Support the development of model policies and catalytic activities that leverage resources to shift demand at global, regional, national, state and municipal levels.
4. Support the establishment and/or adequate expansion of production facilities for mercury-free fever thermometers and other medical devices in developing countries with an emphasis on encouraging substantial production in China and/or India.

As a part of this effort are working together to build a global coalition of ministries of health, other government entities, health care systems, hospitals, academic institutions, professional associations, NGOs and others committed to mercury substitution in the health care sector.

We very much look forward to continuing collaboration with UNEP as part of the broader efforts to address the environmental and human health impacts of mercury.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in red ink, reading "Josh Karliner". The signature is written in a cursive style with a long horizontal flourish at the end.

Joshua Karliner
International Team Coordinator

Cc: Mr. Yves Chartier, WHO
Ms. Maria Doa, EPA