FDA Agrees to Amalgam *(Mercury/Silver Fillings)* Announcement This Year

(Excerpted from the September 27th, 2011 email newsletter Charles Brown, National Counsel, Consumers for Dental Choice)

The U.S. Food and Drug Administration's Director of the Center for Devices has agreed that FDA will issue an "announcement" on amalgam by the end of this year.

Dr. Jeff Shuren, who signed the appalling 2009 amalgam rule, agreed to this timeline as he presided at an FDA town hall meeting in San Francisco on September 22, 2011. It was the third FDA town hall meeting this year – and for the third time, our movement showed up in force to confront Dr. Shuren about the dangers of mercury fillings. The first town hall meeting was in Texas, the second in Florida, and now the third in California – these states represent a quarter of the U.S. population!

California grassroots director Anita Vazquez Tibau presented testimony on behalf of Consumers for Dental Choice. She highlighted amalgam's devastating impact on the Latino community. "Many Spanish speakers told me that their dentists have never ever used the word 'mercurio' in a discussion," Anita explained to Dr. Shuren. "Instead, it is deceptively called la amalgama plata – 'silver fillings.' I'd like to see you tell everyone that mercury is toxic, and please post it in Spanish as well."

Then Anita reminded Dr. Shuren of his own famous boast: "We don't use our people as guinea pigs in the U.S." She held high a photograph of a Latino kindergartener whose mouth is filled – top and bottom – with mercury fillings. "FDA admits that amalgam can cause neurological harm in young children. Their developing neurological systems are 'more sensitive to the neurotoxic effects of mercury vapor' says FDA. And FDA admits there is no evidence that amalgam is safe in children under age six: 'No clinical information is available' says FDA." So stop treating Latino children like guinea pigs, Anita concluded.

Dr. Shuren responded. "What I can tell you is we intend to come out with an announcement by the end of the year." The clock is running.

I congratulate all the Californian consumers and dentists who confronted Dr. Shuren at the San Francisco town hall meeting – and everyone who has spoken up for mercury-free dentistry in their community. It was the grassroots movement rising up all across America that put amalgam at the top of FDA's "to do" list. Thank you.

So what will FDA do? Will FDA act as *its own scientists recommended:* (1) end amalgam use in children, pregnant women, and hypersensitive adults and (2) make sure that every parent knows amalgam is mercury, not silver? Or is FDA simply going to "announce" that it will do something at a later date?

As many of you have been doing since 2009, I urge that you write Director Shuren at jeff.shuren@fda.hhs.gov: First, thank Dr. Shuren for agreeing to act on amalgam this year. Second, ask Dr. Shuren to take real action this year – don't just announce that FDA might act sometime in the future. As Anita explained, our children are being subjected to mercury fillings now – they cannot wait another year. Third, tell Dr. Shuren *to take the advice of the FDA scientists he convened in December 2010.* **Stop amalgam use in children, pregnant women, and hypersensitive adults immediately. And warn every consumer that amalgam is mercury – a neurotoxin.**

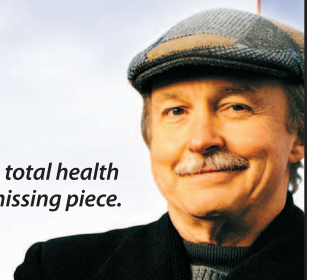**NEWS FLASH!** *City of Malibu calls for end to amalgam. More next issue!*