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January 24, 2013

The Honorable Margaret Hamburg, M.D.
Commissioner, Food and Drug Administration
10903 New Hampshire Avenue
Silver Spring, Maryland 20993

Dear Commissioner Hamburg,

I write to commend the Food and Drug Administration for facilitating this week a very serious discussion on what the proper level of government oversight over hydrocodone drugs should be. A group of my constituents, led by Avi Israel, will be testifying on problems with the current regulatory scheme and how it places unsuspecting citizens in danger for addiction when it could be avoided. I urge your agency to weigh their personal experiences heavily as you evaluate the comments presented at this hearing.

We know that the overuse and addiction to prescription drugs is an epidemic. I have noted to you in the past that the statistics on the use of prescription painkillers are increasingly at an exponential rate with too little critical evaluation on how this increase has contributed to addiction and abuse. Time after time we have heard horrific stories where people die due to their addiction. In too many of these cases, the addiction and abuse was avoidable. To provide proper safeguards to the public – in particularly our children – the federal government must do everything it can to prevent over prescription, addiction, and abuse of these drugs.

The hearings being convened this week present an excellent opportunity to fully understand the challenge presented and begins to forge a pathway for smarter and more effective regulation. The stories of the survivors of families of victims of preventable prescription drug addiction will hopefully provide you with an essential guidepost on the importance the FDA has in this process.

Thank you very much for your consideration of this matter. Please do not hesitate to reach out should you have any further questions.

Sincerely,



BRIAN HIGGINS
Member of Congress