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January 31, 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 Drug Safety and Risk Management Advisory Committee's recent vote recommending that the Food and Drug Administration upschedule hydrocodone combination products from Schedule III to Schedule II under the Controlled Substances Act. On behalf of my constituents whose advocated vociferously on the issue, I applaud the Advisory Committee's thoughtful and deliberative analysis on the issue.

Now that the decision on this issue sits before your agency, I urge you to move with expediency in making this recommendation to the Secretary of Health and Human Services. I understand and appreciate your agency's desire to have a full and fair record of all views presented at last Friday's public hearing. However, I would impress you that for many families across the country that have lost loved ones as a result of abuse of these drugs, each day of delay is critical.

I heartily appreciate your agency's thoughtful consideration of this request, for which I stated to you last week was an excellent opportunity to fully understand the challenge presented by this complicated issue. The stories of the survivors of families of victims of preventable prescription drug addiction undoubtedly provided the Advisory Committee with compelling presentations on the importance the FDA has in the process of preventing addiction and abuse. I urge you to continue to consider this issue seriously, affirming the reasoned recommendation of the Advisory Committee.

Thank you very much for your efforts on this issue.

Sincerely,



BRIAN HIGGINS
Member of Congress