CHAIRMAN BURTON EXAMINES NEW SCIENCE CONNECTING MERCURY AND AUTISM

Washington, D.C. - Congressman Dan Burton (R-IN), Chairman of the House Government Reform Subcommittee on Human Rights & Wellness, convened a hearing to examine the latest scientific research out of leading universities such as Columbia, Johns Hopkins, Northeastern, and Carnegie Mellon, regarding the harmful effects of mercury in the human body. The Subcommittee also discussed the need for additional research to determine the biological basis for autism, as well as how specifically the U.S. Centers for Disease Control (CDC) are reviewing the occurrences of this health epidemic.

The Subcommittee's oversight hearing, entitled ***"Truth Revealed: New Scientific Discoveries Regarding Mercury in Medicine and Autism,"*** was held on Wednesday, September 8, 2004, in Room 2154 of the Rayburn House Office Building at 10:00 a.m.

Stated Chairman Burton, "I strongly believe the information presented in these recent credible scientific studies from our nation's most highly regarded research universities, will shed important new light on the debate over a link between vaccines and autism. It should be crystal clear to both our health officials and the general public by now that mercury is a toxic substance that does not belong in pediatric vaccines. There is simply no need to take the risk."

In May 2004, the Institutes of Medicine (IOM) released its eighth, and final report examining the hypothesis that thimerosal-containing vaccines are causally associated with autism. The IOM concluded there was no such association between thimerosal-containing vaccines and autism - a marked departure from their 2001 report, which called a causal relationship "biologically plausible" - and recommended that no further research to evaluate this issue be funded. However, shortly thereafter in June 2004, the Mailman School of Public Health at Columbia University published findings from their independent study of several strains of mice - those with a certain genetic susceptibility and those without - that were exposed to thimerosal in doses and timing, which corresponds to the current pediatric immunization schedule. The research indicated that the subjects with a specific genetic susceptibility led to responses and activities that mimic those found in Autism Spectrum Disorders (including growth retardation, social withdraw, gross motor coordination, and hyperactivity).

Several distinguished researchers from the various participating universities were on hand to further explain their groundbreaking studies and discuss the impact of their findings on future research of autism and other neurodevelopmental disorders.

The full transcripts of this hearing can be found at:

http://www.reform.house.gov/WHR/Hearings/EventSingle.aspx?EventID=1311