

For Immediate Release

Contact: Michael Bender, 802-223-9000; 802-249-8543

**Advocates Petition FDA to Ban Mercury Fillings in Pregnant Women;
Bans in place in Canada, Britain, Norway, Sweden and many other countries**

Gaithersburg, MD—As an FDA hearing gets underway regarding the safety of amalgam, advocates are petitioning FDA to ban mercury tooth fillings in pregnant women to protect unborn children from unnecessary exposure to mercury. The groups point out that placement of dental mercury has already been banned in many countries, and amalgam makers warn dentists about putting it in pregnant women and children.

“As most everyone knows, the developing fetus is most at risk from mercury.” said Michael Bender, director of the Mercury Policy Project. “So why isn’t FDA joining Health Canada and other countries in banning its placement in pregnant women?”

Even though amalgam is 50% mercury, fewer than one in four Americans know this, according to a recent Zogby poll. It is not due to lack of consumer interest; indeed, the poll shows over 90% of consumers believe they have a right to know about mercury in dental fillings.

According to the petition, encapsulated dental amalgam arrives at a dentist’s office with skull and cross bones affixed next to the words “POISON, CONTAINS METALLIC MERCURY.” Mercury, the warning states, is a “potentially hazardous substance” with “neurotoxic/nephrotoxic effects”; “a chemical known to the state of California to cause birth defects or other reproductive harm.”

The two largest amalgam manufacturers – Kerr and Dentsply advise dentists away from placing amalgam in pregnant women, nursing mothers, children under six, and anyone with kidney disease. Kerr, the largest mercury amalgam manufacturer in the American market, warns dentists:

"The health authorities of the various countries, including Canada, Germany, France, the United Kingdom, Norway and Austria have recommended against the placement or removal of an amalgam in certain individuals such as pregnant and nursing women and persons with impaired kidney function."

Dentsply/Caulk, the second largest mercury amalgam manufacturer, warns: “Contraindication (*N.B.*: “Contraindication” is a directive to forbid, not just a “warning.”) “In children 6 and under” and “In expectant mothers.”

“FDA’s silence over mercury – the same kind of silence our government once had for tobacco – plus the ADA’s “gag rule” on the mercury controversy means that the overwhelming majority of American consumers don’t know that silver fillings are in reality mercury fillings, “ states the petition.

###

For more information, see:

<http://www.mercurypolicy.org/new/documents/WhatPatientsDontKnow.pdf>

http://www.toxicteeth.org/Petition_draft_banmercuryfillings.pdf

Consumers for Dental Choice (www.toxicteeth.org)

International Academy of Oral Medicine and Toxicology (www.iaomt.org)

Mercury Policy Project of the Tides Center (www.mercurypolicy.org),