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Chairman, President &
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March 7, 2008

The Honorable Charles E. Grassley
United States Senate
135 Hart Senate Building
Washington, DC 20510-1501

Dear Senator Grassley:

Thank you for your letter concerning the financial relationships that Merck has with medical organizations and your interest in increasing the transparency of our support to these groups. Like you, Merck supports efforts to promote increased transparency in the health care system. We believe that increased transparency can provide significant benefits to patients and other stakeholders and help to instill greater confidence in our health care system. Over the past few months, Merck has reached out to medical organizations and others in the U.S. health care community to deepen our understanding of the issues from all perspectives.

I am pleased to report to you that Merck will implement a system through which the public can learn about grants Merck makes to the type of health care organizations referenced in your letter. We are currently in the process of developing an action plan and will be able to provide you with details regarding the specific actions we will take and the timetable for action when the plan is completed. We would like to meet with your staff to discuss this important initiative.

In addition, I have been personally engaged in numerous discussions about the transparency issue with other companies in our industry that are also members of the Pharmaceutical Research and Manufacturers of America (PhRMA). I am hopeful that the entire pharmaceutical industry, through PhRMA, will adopt new transparency measures.

I am also aware of your legislation that would require companies to disclose information on our relationships with health care practitioners. This is also an issue that we are actively engaged in with medical professional societies and with others within PhRMA. Here again, we agree with you that a greater degree of transparency would represent progress. We would welcome the opportunity to discuss your legislation further and would like to visit with your staff at their earliest convenience to share our thoughts

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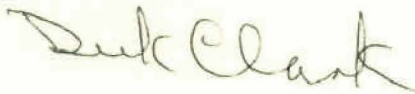
Page 2

regarding the complex considerations that need to be addressed before such a system can be implemented.

I want to stress that Merck strongly believes our relationships with the medical community are vital to the advancement of science, medicine and the well being of patients. Discovering, developing and bringing innovative vaccines and medicines to the market is our first responsibility. That mission cannot be accomplished without sustained relationships with a wide range of organizations and health care providers. As we continue to reach out to our partners in the medical community in support of our mission, I am confident we will be able to find ways to be more transparent about these relationships.

I look forward to providing additional information about Merck's commitment to transparency in the near future. Thank you again for your interest in this important issue.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Dick Clark". The signature is written in dark ink and is positioned below the word "Sincerely,".