



DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH & HUMAN SERVICES

Food and Drug Administration
Rockville MD 20857

• The Honorable John D. Dingell
Chairman
Committee on Energy and Commerce
House of Representatives
Washington, D.C. 20515-6115

JUL 16 2007

Dear Mr. Chairman:

Thank you for your letter dated June 6, 2007, co-signed by Bark Stupak, Chairman, House Subcommittee on Oversight and Investigations, Committee on Energy and Commerce, requesting information about Mr. Douglas Arbesfeld and other media consultants with the Food and Drug Administration (FDA).

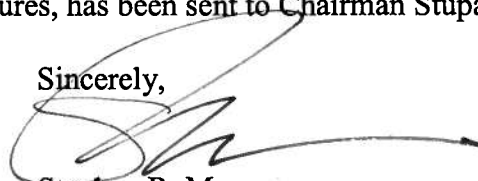
Mr. Arbesfeld is a full-time consultant in the FDA Office of the Chief of Staff on a variety of communications projects. The email referenced in your letter was sent on Thursday, May 24, 2007, contained an article from the *www.heart.org*, a well-respected online cardiology publication, which is published by WebMD. The article was on the *New England Journal of Medicine's* meta-analysis of the diabetes treatment, Avandia, and contained comments from doctors and scientists at Duke University, the University of Pennsylvania, the University of Texas Health Science Center, and others. The original article from the *www.heart.org* also included an inappropriate, anonymous remark about one of the authors of the NEJM Avandia meta-analysis that was posted to a *Wall Street Journal* blog. Mr. Arbesfeld did not in any way highlight or bring attention to this part of the article. Subsequently, the *heart.org* removed that remark from the article.

The title of the e-mail, which you refer to in your letter, was unfortunate and was in no way intended to insult or impugn anyone. Mr. Arbesfeld's supervisor was made aware of the incident. Immediately following the incident, Mr. Arbesfeld was reprimanded and a letter of caution was issued to him from his supervisor.

Due to the magnitude of the request for documentation in your letter, enclosed please find a partial response containing the information that has been completed thus far. Minimal redactions were made to remove personal privacy information, specifically Mr. Arbesfeld's social security number, date of birth, home phone number, home address, home fax number, personal cell phone number, and banking information. Additional documents that you have requested are still being collected and reviewed. This response contains documents relating to your requests in items 3, 5, and 6.

Thank you for your interest in this matter. If you have any further questions, please let us know. A similar letter, without enclosures, has been sent to Chairman Stupak.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Stephen R. Mason", with a long horizontal flourish extending to the right.

Stephen R. Mason
Acting Assistant Commissioner
for Legislation

Enclosures