

August 1, 2007

Washington, DC

**AN OPEN LETTER TO THE COMMUNICATIONS INDUSTRY FROM
THE COALITION FOR HEALTHCARE COMMUNICATION**

Dear Colleagues:

As we prepare to begin the 2007 Fall Season of activities on the communications policy front, our plate is full. However, thanks to those of you who rose to the occasion to contact your elected representatives this summer during the FDA funding process, we appear to have eliminated proposals that would have banned or severely hobbled direct communications with patients, caregivers, and American consumers. We heard directly from several officials that personal contacts from well-informed constituents persuaded them to oppose several of the proposed communications amendments to the FDA legislation.

Thank you. But, don't assume our job is finished. We continue to need your support as the legislation moves through the Conference Committee process after the summer recess.

Other threats to our clients and our communication businesses loom. For example, professional associations and some medical school professors continue to criticize any participation by the drug industry in the education of prescribers, and the press and public officials seem intent to end company-supported education programs or to force mandatory philanthropy on the industry.

Thankfully, several of you are working with the Coalition and the AMA/Industry Task Force to temper extreme views and to help form a responsible consensus on these issues. We support the independence of accredited education and appropriate changes to update ACCME guidelines, but we oppose misguided prosecutions and Draconian proposals by state and federal legislators.

Meanwhile, of course, the role of communication in drug safety issues has become a public policy priority in official Washington, and the Coalition is taking every opportunity to support the public health value of company communications. For example, several agency and company executives have recently volunteered to participate on the new FDA Advisory Committee on Risk Communication.

Undoubtedly, communications issues will arise in the healthcare costs debate during the upcoming 2008 election campaign. We will continue to stress the importance and value of the free flow of information in improving overall health through better compliance and adherence, as well as its role in helping reduce costs.

Again, thank you. We welcome your support and continued active participation in the process.

Sincerely,



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