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Representative Rebekah Warren, Chair  
Committee on the Great Lakes  
and the Environment  
PO Box 30014  
Lansing, MI 48909

Re: House Bill 4569 – Lindane

Dear Representative Warren;

Recently, I learned that that the State of Michigan is considering a ban on two pharmaceutical products, Lindane Lotion and Lindane Shampoo. As the former Surgeon General of the United States and Director of Health for the State of Arkansas, a Distinguished Professor of Pediatrics and Public Health at the University of Arkansas for Medical Sciences (UAMS), I am quite concerned about this proposed legislation.

Scabies and lice remain public health issues that are not adequately controlled. These infestations of the human body are highly contagious and easily spread within families and among individuals living in crowded situations such as long-term care facilities and students in schools. Body lice, blood-sucking parasites, are vectors for several diseases typically encountered under conditions of overcrowding and poverty. These diseases include typhus, trench fever and relapsing fever. Other health problems can develop when lice are not eradicated.

I served as a board-certified pediatrician and in the sub-specialty of Pediatric Endocrinology on the UAMS faculty and medical director for long-term care facility for more than 35 years. I/we treated many patients infested with lice and Scabies-causing mites with topical medical grade Lindane Lotion or Shampoo. Most of these patients had failed to respond to over-the-counter medications or home remedies.

Since head lice can be a major health problem in children, especially in urban environments, it is critical to have a safe and effective alternative medication. All medications can be toxic, therefore must be used as directed. It is important that physicians, pharmacists, nurses, parents, guardians and patients understand the adverse effects and safety precautions for use of Lindane especially in the very young, elderly or patients with a convulsive disorder.

The medical community can best determine medical therapy using drugs the FDA have shown to be effective, and for which the benefits outweigh the potential risk when used appropriately. The FDA Medical Guide says:

- Do not use Lindane Lotion unless you have scabies and were treated with another medicine that did not work for you or you cannot use other, safer medicines to treat your scabies.
- Do not use Lindane Shampoo unless you have head lice and another medication did not work for you or you cannot use other, safer medicines to treat your lice.
- Lindane Lotion and Shampoo are mainly for adults and children who weigh at least 110 pounds. If you weigh less than 110 pounds, use Lindane only if your doctor thinks it is medically appropriate.
- Do not use Lindane if you need to treat a premature or young baby.
- Do not use Lindane if you are breastfeeding as it can get in your milk and may be fed to your baby.
- If you are pregnant, do not use Lindane unless you have talked to your doctor about using it. Ask your doctor for a safer medicine. Use Lindane only if needed.

The position of the FDA is that Lindane should remain available as a second line treatment of scabies and lice for patients for whom first line therapies have failed or cannot be tolerated.

I strongly support the position of the FDA and CDEC and urge this bill be defeated.

I am certainly willing to discuss the matter with you at your convenience.

Sincerely,



M. Joycelyn Elders, MD  
Former US Surgeon General