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Health - Cellular Phones



Elizabeth Drye

04/09/97 06:34:19 PM



Health -
cell phones

Record Type: Record

To: Bruce N. Reed/OPD/EOP
cc: Elena Kagan/OPD/EOP
Subject: cell phones

Thanks for cell phone article. I did see. I don't have time to finish my half-written memo to you, but if you read the article you no longer need it. I'm exploring, with VP's office, whether it makes sense for VP or POTUS to push the industry to commit to a fuller research agenda. FDA thinks that's the right move. Don Gips has agreed to host a meeting with industry to explore. Hope to do some time next week.

Health -
cellular phones



Elizabeth Drye

04/04/97 10:53:39 AM



Record Type: Record

To: Bruce N. Reed/OPD/EOP

cc: Elena Kagan/OPD/EOP, Christopher C. Jennings/OPD/EOP

Subject: Cell Phones

Here's what I've learned and how I suggest we proceed re. cell phones and brain cancer.

FDA regulates radiation-emitting products, including cell phones, under the Radiation Control for Health and Safety Act of 1968. If FDA can show a product presents a hazard, it can (1) recall the product; require the company to replace or repair the product; and/or (2) set radiation emission limits. FDA does not have any evidence that cell phones present a health problem, cannot afford to conduct health effects studies, and does not have authority to require companies to pay for health effects research.

Still, at FDA's urging, the Cellular Telephone Industry Association (CTIA) set up a blind trust several years ago to fund independent health effects research. After 2 years of work, the research operation has perfected methods for studying long-term cell phone exposures in animals, but hasn't actually started an animal study. The industry is supporting an epidemiological study of cell phone and non cell-phone users (exposure levels measured by participants phone bills!), but that, not surprisingly, has not yet shown any increase in risk.

FDA has also urged the industry to design products to minimize radiation exposure. Product designs are proprietary, so FDA doesn't know whether the industry has made such changes.

Industry is, of course, ambivalent about funding research that may show cell phones are hazardous, and CTIA's commitment to the research agenda is apparently in doubt.