

Committee Continues Investigation into Celebrity Drug Endorsements

Reps. John D. Dingell (D-MI), Chairman of the Committee on Energy and Commerce, and Bart Stupak (D-MI), Chairman of the Subcommittee on Oversight and Investigations, yesterday wrote to the companies involved in the production of direct-to-consumer advertisements for Lipitor, a product of Pfizer, Inc., featuring Dr. Robert Jarvik.

NEWS RELEASE

Committee on Energy and Commerce

Rep. John D. Dingell, Chairman

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Drug Endorsements
Dingell, Stupak Question Companies Behind

Lipitor Ads Featuring Dr. Jarvik

Washington, D.C. - Reps. John D. Dingell (D-MI), Chairman of the Committee on Energy and Commerce, and Bart Stupak (D-MI), Chairman of the Subcommittee on Oversight and Investigations, yesterday wrote to the companies involved in the production of direct-to-consumer advertisements for Lipitor, a product of Pfizer, Inc., featuring Dr. Robert Jarvik. The Committee launched an investigation into the use of celebrity endorsements of prescription medications in direct-to-consumer advertising on January 7, 2007, by writing to Pfizer, Inc., regarding Dr. Jarvik's appearance in Lipitor commercials.

The letters, which were sent to IMC2; Maya Group; Cline, Davis & Mann, Inc.; ARS Group, Guideline Inc.; Ipsos-ASI, Inc.; Ipsos-Understanding Unlimited; The Kaplan Thaler Group, Ltd.; and Unit 7, raise concerns that consumers may

misinterpret the health claims of a prescription drug promoted by a celebrity physician. Dingell and Stupak also express concerns that Dr. Jarvik's qualifications may be misinterpreted in Lipitor's advertisement campaign, given that he is not a practicing physician with a valid license in any State.

"We continue to be concerned Pfizer's Lipitor ads mislead American consumers," said Dingell. "In the ads, Dr. Jarvik seems to be dispensing medical advice, despite the fact that he is not licensed to practice or prescribe medicine. Americans battling heart disease deserve nothing less than information that is accurate, credible and clear."

"We are taking a hard look at the deceptive tactics of drug companies in their direct-to-consumer advertising," Stupak said. "In the case of Lipitor, the ads with Dr. Jarvik leave many viewers with the impression that he is a heart doctor, when in fact he does not hold a license to practice medicine and — as best we can determine — has never passed the medical boards. The Subcommittee is concerned with advertising that provides misleading information to consumers as they make medical decisions."

[View the letters](#)

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Prepared by the Committee on Energy and Commerce

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