

Food and Drug Administration Rockville MD 20857

. August 31, 2007

Tammy Radel Administrator Pennsylvania State Board of Medicine P.O. Box 2649 Harrisburg, PA 17105-2649

Dear Ms. Radel;

I am writing to ask your help in encouraging Pennsylvania State Board of Medicine physicians to take advantage of the growing number of electronic tools available from the U.S. Food and Drug Administration for accessing important safety information on the medical products they use and prescribe. As FDA moves from a paper-based to an electronic-based environment, we are providing new ways to offer timely, science-based, and clinically relevant safety information directly to providers and their patients at the point of care. I would appreciate your willingness to help us get the word out. Healthcare practitioners can now receive clinically useful safety information on medical products from FDA by:

- Subscribing to FDA's MedWatch listserve notification or RSS news feeds<sup>1</sup>
- Bookmarking FDA's MedWatch Web site<sup>2</sup>
- Downloading audio broadcasts (podcasts)

During the past several years, FDA has been working to harness informatics with the goal of achieving an electronic environment for all of our regulatory activities, including communicating timely safety information to providers and patients. For example:

- In January 2006, FDA began making updated prescription drug labels available to physicians free of charge through the National Library of Medicine's DailyMed Web site.<sup>3</sup>
- In March 2007, FDA hosted a public meeting to explore opportunities for collaborations with private healthcare organizations to develop a nationwide electronic network supporting rapid access to and analysis of medical product adverse events and the dissemination of timely risk communications.

Drug and device manufacturers are also turning to electronic methods to disseminate safety information to healthcare professionals in a timely, targeted, and secure manner.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>1</sup> http://www.fda.gov/medwatch/elist.htm

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>2</sup> See http://www.fda.gov/medwatch/safety.htm

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>3</sup> See http://dailymed.nlm.nih.gov

FDA supports the use of electronic methods to disseminate medical product safety information, whether by industry or by FDA. <sup>1</sup>

I believe it is critical that FDA work with healthcare organizations such as yours to expand our risk communication activities as part of the Agency's larger patient safety effort. If you have suggestions or comments about ways FDA can reach our nation's healthcare professionals electronically, or if you would like additional information about FDA activities in this area, please contact Dr. Norman Marks at <a href="mailto:safetyinformation@fda.hhs.gov">safetyinformation@fda.hhs.gov</a> or 301-827-1512.

With best regards,

Janet Woodcock, MD

Deputy Commissioner and Chief Medical Officer

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>1</sup> See http://www.fda.gov/oc/guidance/electronic.html