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Congress of the United States
House of Representatives

July 28, 2011

The Honorable Margaret Hamburg
Commissioner
Food and Drug Administration
10903 New Hampshire Avenue, Room 2217
Silver Spring, MD 20993

Dear Commissioner Hamburg,

Several of my constituents have contacted me about the pending ruling on the cancer drug, Avastin and whether the Food and Drug Administration (FDA) will continue to approve use of this medication.

I was moved to action by the personal story of Crystal Hanna, a West Virginian. Crystal is a wife and mother of two young children, ages 4 and 7, who is currently battling metastatic breast cancer for a year now. By taking Avastin and a chemotherapy drug, she is doing well. Before she began treatments of Avastin, her cancer came back aggressively following her first round of chemotherapy. If the FDA pulls Avastin off label, Crystal's insurance will likely not cover her treatments, and she will be left with medications that have not been effective in helping her overcome her battle with cancer.

As other Members of Congress wrote to you earlier, Avastin has been shown to produce significant positive results for some patients battling cancer, increasing their odds of survival or extending their lives by precious months. While not everyone taking Avastin experiences the same benefits, no perfect treatment exists for terminally-ill cancer patients, and we must continue to allow options for those with nowhere else to turn.

The decision of whether a medication like Avastin is a viable treatment for an individual should rest in the hands of a patient and his or her physician, not a government panel unfamiliar with a patient's individual medical case.

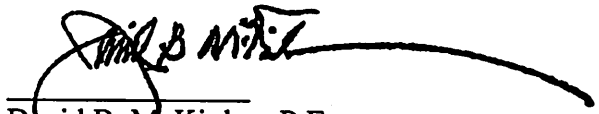
Clearly, it is important that we evaluate the safety of medications and assess both their potential benefits and risks. However, when the FDA goes too far with its regulations, it prevents sick Americans from taking medications that could save or extend their lives or reduce their suffering. The FDA's role is to help facilitate patient access to life-saving drugs, not suppress access to them.

A decision by the FDA to pull approval of Avastin could also have serious negative implications for the future of drug development, discouraging research and development

into other new medicines. For the sake of all those battling cancer and other diseases without a cure, it is also vital that we continue to build on the progress that has been made and push forward in search of improved medical treatments.

Thank you for your consideration of this important issue. It is my hope that the FDA will reverse course so that women with aggressive breast cancer can continue to access Avastin to help them with their fight.

Sincerely,



David B. McKinley, P.E.
Member of Congress