

November 26, 2003

Mark B. McClellan, M.D., Ph.D. Food and Drug Administration 5600 Fishers Lane Rockville, Maryland 20857

Dear Dr. McClellan,

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I respectfully urge you not to accept an award from the American Council on Science and Health (ACSH) at the group's event on December 4.

To be candid, ACSH is a deceptively packaged front group for companies seeking to deflect public criticism and undermine public health and environmental protections. Although the organization claims to offer independent scientific analysis of issues, ACSH's funding by food, oil, chemical, and other companies with a financial interest in preventing controls over their risky products largely dictates the nature of its statements.

ACSH denies links between a diet high in saturated fat and cholesterol and heart disease, dismisses the dangers of global warming, calls vegetarianism an eating disorder, and filed a friend-of-the-court brief (paid for by a maker of formaldehyde) in defense of a probable human carcinogen. Whether it's formaldehyde, trans fat, alar, acrylamide, or many other chemicals, ACSH is there defending it. After years of observing ACSH, I long ago concluded that their policy statements usually are not based on sound science, but are predetermined by ACSH's and its corporate benefactors' anti-regulatory agendas.

ACSH's donors have been (it no longer discloses its funders) a veritable "Who's Who" of regulated industries – including many that fall under the purview of the U.S. Food and Drug Administration. Abbott Laboratories, Bristol-Myers Squibb, Eli Lilly, Dow Corning, Kraft, Merck, Monsanto, NutraSweet Co., and Pfizer are just a few of ACSH's current or past donors that are regulated by your agency. If you would not accept an award from any of those companies directly, you should not accept an award from them indirectly, through ACSH.

If you accept ACSH's award, you will lend credibility to an organization that for years has worked to counter the FDA's mission and you will tarnish your own reputation and credibility. I strongly urge you to decline the "honor."

Sincerely,

Michael F. Jacobson

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