



## Organizational Overview

January 2007

**Mercury is now acknowledged as one of the most neurotoxic substances on earth and must be fully investigated to determine its impact on the population's health and to identify treatments for affected individuals.**

The Coalition for SafeMinds ☞ 254 Trickum Creek Road ☞ Tyrone, GA 30290 ☞  
(404) 934-0777 ☞ [www.safeminds.org](http://www.safeminds.org)



## TABLE OF CONTENTS

<b>3</b>	From the President of the Board
<b>5</b>	About SafeMinds
<b>6</b>	Critical Issues
<b>8</b>	Mission, Vision and Strategies
<b>9</b>	2006 Accomplishments
<b>11</b>	Research & Publications
<b>13</b>	Board of Directors

## FROM THE PRESIDENT OF THE BOARD

Dear Friends of SafeMinds,

In 2007 we have set an ambitious goal of organizational transformation. In recent months, it became apparent to the Board of Directors that to fulfill our mission to investigate and raise awareness of the risks posed by mercury exposure, we must embrace change. Although exposure to mercury from thimerosal was the largest mercury exposure source at the time of our inception in 2000 and continues to be a concern due to its continued use in flu vaccines administered to pregnant women, infants and children we have decided to broaden our mission to include mercury in all its forms present in the air we breathe, the food we eat and the products we use, including vaccines.

The decision to broaden our mission is supported by the recent announcement by the Environmental Protection Agency that approximately 1 in every 6 women of childbearing age in our country today have levels of mercury in their bodies that could cause neurological injury to their unborn children. Because mercury is a cumulative neurotoxin every effort must be made to reduce all sources of exposure in an effort to protect our children from harm.

Since SafeMinds was founded, we have successfully created a rising awareness of the dangers of mercury exposure from thimerosal, while also funding and publishing pioneering research leading to biomedical interventions for Autism Spectrum Disorders. Now, in 2007, it is time to turn our attention to the environmental sources of mercury, while continuing our fight to remove mercury from all vaccines.

Mercury is now acknowledged as one of the most neurotoxic substances on earth and must be fully investigated to determine its impact on the population's health and to identify treatments for affected individuals, as well as establishing much needed safety standards. Mercury in medicine, created via industry emissions, in the waterways and food chain of our planet must be reduced. SafeMinds is committed to funding research and raising awareness to meet this goal.

This document shares our recent accomplishments, updates our goals and articulates a new vision for success. The core of our mission remains the same – to provide sound scientific information and investigations on the dangers of unnecessary exposure to mercury in any form. We continue to carry out this mandate with dedication and compassion.

There has been much progress in recent years, yet at the same time we face real challenges. Conflicts of interest within governmental agencies identified in the Congressional Report *Mercury in Medicine – Taking Unnecessary Risks*, remain. This hampers the dissemination of sound science and makes the funding of research difficult.

**FROM THE PRESIDENT OF THE BOARD (CONTINUED)**

With each year we expand our reach, with new donors and new volunteers, but it is more crucial than ever, as we take on even more, that we have your support. We remain on track to reach our goals and to dream new ones. We thank you for your past support of our vital efforts. There is still more work to be done, and we hope you will join us on this journey.

Sincerely,

Lyn Redwood  
President of the Board

## ABOUT SAFEMINDS

The Coalition for SafeMinds was founded to raise awareness, support research, change policy and focus national attention on the growing evidence of a link between mercury and neurological disorders such as autism, attention deficit disorder, language delay and learning difficulties. Our mission is to end the health and personal devastations caused by the needless exposure to mercury, one of the most neurotoxic substances on earth.

In April of 2000, SafeMinds founders put forth the first definitive work reviewing the link between mercury and Autism Spectrum Disorders. This effort showed that the autism presentation mirrored mercury toxicity. This research was key to propelling the issue into the awareness of the public and government officials. The resulting report, *Autism: A Novel Form of Mercury Poisoning* (Bernard, Enayati, Redwood, Roger, Binstock) was and remains recognized as a cornerstone document to the discourse on medical mercury exposure and toxicity and its effects on health.

Since this historical report, SafeMinds has sponsored more than \$750,000 in research related specifically to mercury and adverse neurological outcomes. This level of financial commitment establishes SafeMinds as the largest non-profit organization funding mercury- and autism-related research. SafeMinds relentlessly pursues the scientific truth about mercury and neurodevelopmental disorders through providing constant surveillance and vigilance on misinformation about this issue in the media.

The work of SafeMinds' parent advocate founders is documented in several highly publicized journalistic reports including Robert F. Kennedy's 2005 Rolling Stones article: *Deadly Immunity*, and David Kirby's 2005 novel *Evidence of Harm, Mercury in Vaccines and the Autism Epidemic: A Medical Controversy*. Kirby's book has since been opted for a movie by Participant Productions, which has produced such films as *An Inconvenient Truth*, *Syriana*, and *North Country*. This will bring the history of the politics of mercury in medicine and autism to an even wider audience.

## CRITICAL ISSUES

Thimerosal is a mercury-based preservative developed in the 1930s ~~that~~ has been used in as many as 50 vaccines. In the 1982 Federal Register, an expert panel at the FDA reviewed thimerosal and found that it was toxic and caused cell death. The FDA called for its removal in over the counter products. Additionally, In 1999, the FDA stated that mercury exposure from vaccines exceeded Federal Safety Guidelines. Government officials admitted they were "*asleep at the switch*" when they failed to add up the cumulative exposure levels as new vaccines were added to the early infant vaccination schedule in the early 1990's.

Formatted: Indent: First line: 0"

Deleted: and

A decade ago, the rate of autism was 1 to 2 per 10,000. Centers for Disease Control (CDC) research now indicates that one in every 150 children now have autism. The dramatic rise in autism rates correlates with the increase in mercury exposure. Thimerosal was first marketed in the mid 1930's. Autism was first described as a new, never before seen disorder in 1943, in children born in the 1930's. Neurodevelopmental disorders such as autism have similar symptoms to those of mercury poisoning.

Thousands of families have reported that their normally-developing children changed after receiving mercury-containing vaccines and began displaying symptoms that lead to a diagnosis of autism. The symptoms of autism not only mimic those of mercury poisoning, but children with autism have been found to have more mercury in their bodies than typically-developing children.

In March, 2001, the FDA issued a statement warning pregnant women and young children not to eat fish containing high levels of mercury for fear of causing neurological problems in children. Yet, the CDC's National Immunization Program has continued to allow these same sensitive populations to be exposed to mercury from routinely administered flu shots which contain more mercury than seafood.

The Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) recently closed down schools when it was discovered that air mercury levels were at 30mcg/m. (EPA's action level in the air is 1mcg/m). Yet infants injected with multiple mercury containing vaccines in the 1990s received up to 187 mcg during the first six months of life. **A typical dose received by a two-month old who received three mercury vaccines was 125 times EPA's daily allowable exposure levels.**

In 2001, the Institute of Medicine (IOM) stated it is "biologically plausible" that Thimerosal in vaccines caused autism, ADD/ ADHD and neurodevelopmental disorders in general.

Mercury, having been acknowledged as one of the most neurotoxic substances on earth, must be fully investigated to determine its impact on the population's health and to identify treatments for affected individuals, as well as establishing much needed safety standards. Mercury in medicinal uses, created via industry emissions, in the waterways and food chain of our planet must be reduced. SafeMinds is committed to funding research that lends itself to these goals and has historically furnished research that continues to support the need for these investigates, as well as the harm of continued exposure to mercury.

**Formatted:** Font: (Default) Times  
New Roman

## **MISSION, VISION & STRATEGIES**

### **Mission**

The Coalition for SafeMinds is a non-profit organization founded scientifically investigate, support research, raise awareness, change policy and focus national attention on the growing evidence of a link between mercury and neurological disorders such as autism, attention deficit disorder, language delay and learning difficulties. Our mission is to end the health and personal devastations caused by the needless exposure to mercury, one of the most neurotoxic substances on earth.

### **Vision**

We envision that through the accomplishment of our mission we will assist in creating optimal health in pregnant women, infants and children through the elimination of unnecessary exposure to mercury in its many forms.

### **Strategies**

We serve proactively in the scientific, governmental and advocacy communities to provide sound science in an effort to raise public awareness and serve in an educational capacity to regulatory and legislative bodies. We use a multifaceted approach in an effort to accomplish our mission:

- SafeMinds works aggressive to educate government agencies, legislators, manufacturers and retailers to the scientific research regarding mercury in medicine and foster its removal from medical and health products.
- SafeMinds encourages and engages others for more research to scientifically understand how mercury in these products causes harm and how effective treatments can be developed for those already exposed.
- SafeMinds looks to serve as a clearinghouse for the gathering and dissemination of good and proper relevant scientific research, and to provide peer-to-peer review opportunities for those efforts.
- SafeMinds provides information to promote awareness to parents and clinicians in order to education them about the issue.
- SafeMinds encourages open investigations into how mercury has persisted in routine medical products, such as vaccines, despite its known neurotoxicity.

## 2006 ACCOMPLISHMENTS

As we look back over this year, SafeMinds realizes how proud we are to be part of a community of families and advocates who are working hard to ensure that all children are safe. Our community's support of our mission through volunteer time, contributions and kind words have enabled us to accomplish a great deal in 2006.

Currently, the EPA estimates that 1 in every 6 women of childbearing age has sufficient levels of mercury in their bodies to cause possible neurological injury to their unborn children. In our ongoing effort to publicize the dangers of mercury exposure and related neurodevelopmental disorders and bring national attention to this issue, SafeMinds has:

- Funded over \$200,000 in research related specifically to mercury and adverse neurological outcomes. This amount represents the most we have funded in a single year, bringing the total of research funded to more than \$750,000.
- Sponsored a workshop and half-day session devoted solely to autism at the 23<sup>rd</sup> annual Neurotoxicology Conference held in Little Rock, Arkansas.
- Worked diligently on drafting revisions to the Combating Autism Act and advocating for environmental research provisions in the legislation.
- Attended the meeting of the Advisory Committee for Immunization Practices (ACIP) and presented the members with a 10-page document signed by 15 national organizations requesting the committee state a preference for mercury free flu vaccines for pregnant women, infants and children as recommended by the Institute of Medicine in 2001.
- Rallied volunteers around the country to help distribute 5,000 SafeMinds brochures exposing the risks of thimerosal containing flu vaccine.
- Attended the National Academy of Sciences meeting, "Toxicogenomics and Early Life Exposures" in Washington, D.C.
- Participated in a media briefing with *Put Children First* on the results of a flu vaccine survey demonstrating that 76% of respondents were unaware that most flu shots contained mercury.
- Collaborated with the National Autism Association on developing detailed recommendations for additional environmental research to be included in the National Institute of Health autism research matrix. These recommendations were presented at the NIH Interagency Autism Coordinating Committee.
- Presented a statement on the Vaccine Safety and Public Confidence Assurance Act at the press conference sponsored by Congressman Dave Weldon.

**2006 ACCOMPLISHMENTS (CONTINUED)**

- Prepared and distributed a document to the NIEHS when they were asked to look in the VSD data. The document offered suggestions in hopes that past mistakes using VSD will not be repeated so as to create the most valid and reliable study possible.
- Participated on the Public Interest Liaison Group to the National Institute for Environmental Health Sciences.
- Sponsored a conference on autism recovery in Bolinas, California.
- Presented at DAN! Conferences and local autism meetings.
- Thanks to Tracy Paradowski and our supporters in the Buffalo, New York area we held our first Steps for SafeMinds fundraising walk.

Additionally, SafeMinds has raised public awareness regarding the harmful effects of mercury exposure and related neurodevelopmental disorders by monitoring information regarding mercury exposure in the media and issuing rapid and accurate responses. The studies below represent only a few such studies that continue to mislead our community and to which SafeMinds issued a speedy response:

- Dr. Paul Shattuck's study in Pediatrics, "Diagnostic Substitution and Changing Autism Prevalence" challenged the studies findings and conclusions.
- The Journal of the American Academy of Physicians Assistants article, "Vaccines, thimerosal and neurodevelopmental outcomes," where SafeMinds corrected several inaccuracies.
- Dr. Eric Fombone's July 2006 Pediatrics article which stated that it was "very clear" that there is no relationship between mercury-based thimerosal in vaccines and the onset of autism.

Our 2006 accomplishments were many and there are more to tackle in 2007. We are grateful for all the support of our community during this past year and hope that support will continue as we pursue ending the personal health devastations caused by the needless use of mercury in all applications where alternatives exist.

## RESEARCH & PUBLICATIONS

While we encourage all families to take aggressive steps to prevent exposure to thimerosal and mercury from all sources, the ultimate goal is to encourage and support efforts to conduct medical research that provides credible findings to support that the mercury/autism hypothesis is true. Eventually we hope for a remedy or cure to be found that will reverse the damage incurred.

Since its inception in 2000, Safe Minds has sponsored more than \$750,000 in research related specifically to mercury and adverse neurological outcomes, including autism. This level of financial commitment establishes Safe Minds as the largest non-profit organization funding mercury and autism related research. Research proposals are accepted throughout the year. Our recently funded projects are listed below:

### **Neurotoxic Effects of Postnatal Thimerosal are Mouse Strain Dependant**

*Mady Hornig, MD, PhD, Columbia University*

The developing brain is uniquely susceptible to the neurotoxic hazard posed by mercurials. Host differences in maturation, metabolism, nutrition, sex, and autoimmunity influence outcomes. How population-based variability affects the safety of the ethylmercury-containing vaccine preservative, thimerosal, is unknown. Reported increases in the prevalence of autism, a highly heritable neuropsychiatric condition, are intensifying public focus on environmental exposures such as thimerosal. Immune profiles and family history in autism are frequently consistent with autoimmunity. The investigator hypothesizes that autoimmune propensity influences outcomes in mice following thimerosal challenges that mimic routine childhood immunizations. Autoimmune disease-sensitive SJL /J mice showed growth delay; reduced locomotion; exaggerated response to novelty; and densely packed, hyperchromic hippocampal neurons with altered glutamate receptors and transporters. Strains resistant to autoimmunity, C57BL /6J and BALB /cJ, were not susceptible. These findings implicate genetic influences and provide a model for investigating thimerosal-related neurotoxicity.

### **Influence of Thimerosal on Phospholipid Methylation in Lymphoblasts**

*Richard C. Deth, PhD, Northeastern University*

It has been proposed that the ethylmercury-containing vaccine preservative thimerosal may contribute to autism, and our earlier studies demonstrated the ability of thimerosal to inhibit methionine synthase-dependent phospholipid methylation (PLM) in cultured human neuroblastoma cells. To investigate the possible contribution of this action of thimerosal to autism, we compared its ability to inhibit PLM measured with [ <sup>14</sup>C]-formate, which labels the cellular pool of 5-methyltetrahydrofolate and therefore selectively measures methionine synthase-dependent PLM. PLM was measured in immortalized lymphoblasts from same-sex siblings who were discordant for autism, as obtained from the Autism Genetic Resource Exchange (AGRE). Basal PLM was not significantly different between lymphoblasts from autistic and non-autistic siblings. Thimerosal (100 nM) did not significantly affect PLM in lymphoblasts from non-autistic siblings, but significantly reduced PLM in lymphoblasts from autistic subjects ( $p < 0.05$ ). Analysis of MTHFR and transcobalamin polymorphisms in a sample of 18 sib-pairs did not reveal a significant genetic pattern of association with autism. Preliminary studies indicate a trend for autistic subjects to exhibit higher rates of mitochondrial oxygen consumption. Taken together, our results to date provide evidence that methionine synthase-dependent methylation is more sensitive to thimerosal in cells from autistic children, consistent with a potential role of thimerosal in causing autism.

**Mechanisms of Thimerosal Toxicity***Jill James, PhD, University of Arkansas*

Children with autism have increased vulnerability to pro-oxidant exposures such as ethyl mercury in Thimerosal as a result of increased frequency of genetic polymorphisms that reduce the synthesis of cysteine and glutathione, the major metabolites involved in the detoxification and excretion of mercury. Dr.

James will extend preliminary data on plasma levels in children with autism by measuring intracellular levels of thiol metabolites and selected enzyme activities in lymphoblastoid cell lines derived from children with autism and unrelated control children. Intracellular metabolic profiles will be correlated with genetic profiles of specific polymorphisms that negatively affect methionine, cysteine, and glutathione synthesis.

These experiments will allow us to determine whether intracellular metabolites and related enzyme activities are abnormal in children with autism compared to controls and whether the intracellular metabolic profile reflects the profile previously observed in plasma (see preliminary data). If the observed metabolic profiles are associated with increased frequency of polymorphisms in the same metabolic pathway, it will provide support for our hypothesis that children with autism have a genetic vulnerability to heavy metal toxicity. In addition, we will expose lymphoblastoid cells derived from autistic children and unrelated controls to increasing doses of thimerosal (nanomolar to micromolar levels) and define individual dose-response curves in terms of cytotoxicity, glutathione depletion, and DNA damage. In addition, we will determine whether subtoxic doses of ethylmercury in the presence of subtoxic levels of an additional pro-oxidant heavy metal such as lead, will interact synergistically to reach a threshold of toxicity.

If lymphocytes from autistic children exhibit increased sensitivity to Thimerosal toxicity in culture compared to cells from normal children, the dose-response curve should be shifted to the left. An interaction between subtoxic doses of thimerosal and other heavy metals in autistic children, but not normal children, would further support the hypothesis that autistic children have an increased vulnerability to pro-oxidant exposures. In addition, we will be able to determine whether an increase in thimerosal sensitivity is associated with abnormal genetic and metabolic profiles and glutathione depletion. If confirmed, these results would support for the hypothesis that children with autism have an increased sensitivity to thimerosal as a result of reduced intracellular levels of cysteine and glutathione, and consequently, reduced capacity to detoxify and excrete ethylmercury.

**Thimerosal Neurotoxicity***Thomas Burbacher, PhD, University of Washington*

The specific aim of this research project is to determine the extent of changes in the absolute number of neurons, astrocytes and microglia within six specific regions of the central nervous system of the nonhuman primate (NHP) *Macaca fascicularis* following a known low-level thimerosal (ethylmercury) exposure. The changes in absolute cell number will be determined by use of modern designed-based stereological methods utilizing the optical disector and fractionator principles. The experimental design will test the hypothesis that exposure to thimerosal will correlate with changes in cell number within specific CNS regions, suggesting thimerosal may cause structural damage to the CNS. The six regions to be examined will include sub regions of the frontal cortex (principal sulcus- memory processing, higher function), occipital pole (calcarine sulcus-visual cortex), thalamus (functional integration), hippocampus (memory), amygdala (emotion integration), and the cerebellum (coordination, motor skills). These regions have been selected for investigation because they are well-characterized anatomical regions of the NHP brain, and extensive information about these regions has been developed describing CNS effects of methylmercury exposure. Ultimately, the results from the investigation proposed in this study will help clarify issues about the safety of ethylmercury exposure. In addition, this proposed project will seek to determine the distribution of inorganic mercury within the six specific brain regions by use of an autometallographic technique capable of localizing mercury deposits within specific cell types in histology tissue sections. Previous mercury quantification has demonstrated that inorganic mercury is present in the brain of these animals following thimerosal exposure, suggesting ethylmercury may be demethylated in the brain in a manner similar to demethylation of methylmercury that we have previously reported. Prior to sampling of the brains for the stereology and autometallography methods described above, the intact brains will be scanned with magnetic resonance imaging (MRI) techniques to allow for the future determination of

potential volumetric changes of (i) total brain volume, (ii) all segmented divisions of total brain volume (cerebral cortex, cerebral white matter, cerebellum, caudate, globus pallidus–putamen, diencephalon, brainstem), (iii) lobes of the cerebral cortex and (iv) individual cortical lobe sub regions (parcellation units) for the entire cerebral cortex. In addition, specific anti-body based histochemistry methods will be used to identify reactive glial cells and immune cells within these brain samples.

**Following is a list of papers authored or co-authored by SafeMinds board members:**

**Autism: a novel form of mercury poisoning.**

Bernard S, Enayati A, Redwood L, Roger H, Binstock T. , Med Hypotheses. 2001;56(4):462-471

**The role of mercury in the pathogenesis of autism.**

Bernard S, Enayati A, Roger H, Binstock T, Redwood L. , Mol Psychiatry. 2001;7:S42-S43

**Predicted mercury concentration in hair from infant immunizations: Cause for concern.**

Redwood L, Bernard S, Brown D. , Neurotoxicology. 2001; 22(5): 691-697

**Any changes in prevalence of autism must be determined.**

Blaxill, MF , BMJ. 2002;324:296

**Reduced levels of mercury in first baby haircuts of autistic children.**

Holmes AS, Blaxill MF, Haley BE, Int J Toxic. 2003;22(4):277-285

**On Croen et al (2002), the changing prevalence of autism in California.**

Blaxill MF, Baskin DS, Spitzer WO, J Aut Devel Disord. 2003;33(2):223-226

**Thimerosal and autism? A plausible hypothesis that should not be dismissed.**

Blaxill MF, Redwood L, Bernard S., Med Hypotheses. 2004;62(5):788-94.

**Association between thimerosal-containing vaccine and autism.**

Bernard S., JAMA. 2004 Jan 14;291(2):180.

**Concerns continue over mercury and autism.**

Blaxill MF, Am J Prev Med. 2004 Jan;26(1):91; reply 91-2

**What's going on? The question of time trends in autism.**

Blaxill MF. , Public Health Rep. 2004 Nov-Dec;119(6):536-51

**Vaccine Safety & Autism: the System Is Broke, Let's Fix It.**

Bernard S., Health Advocacy Bulletin. Sarah Lawrence College. Fall 2004; 2(1): 8-10

## BOARD OF DIRECTORS



### **Lyn Redwood, RN, MSN – President/Treasurer**

Ms. Redwood is the co-founder and President of the Coalition for SafeMinds along with serving on the board of the National Autism Association. As a Nurse Practitioner, Lyn became involved in autism research when her son, Will, was diagnosed with pervasive developmental disorder in 1999. Having calculated the level of mercury exposure received from multiple vaccines containing thimerosal (mercury), Lyn discovered that her son was exposed to levels 125 times the EPA Federal Safety guidelines. As a result of this work, Lyn testified before the Government Reform Committee on “Mercury in Medicine: Are We Taking Unnecessary Risks?” and before a sub committee on health in 2003.

Lyn co-authored Autism: A Novel Form of Mercury Toxicity, a landmark paper linking the symptoms of autism with excessive exposure to mercury and was published in *Neurotoxicology, Medical Hypothesis, Molecular Psychiatry, Mothering Magazine* and *Autism-Asperger’s Digest*. She has appeared on Good Morning America with Diane Sawyer, the Montel Williams Show, as well as being interviewed by *U.S. News and World Report, Wired Magazine, and People*. Lyn is prominently featured in the award winning book by David Kirby, Evidence of Harm which will be a major motion picture.

Lyn lives outside of Atlanta with her husband and three children; Hanna, Drew and Will. She has a Bachelor of Science in Nursing and a Masters of Science in Community Health Nursing as well as being an ANA certified Family Nurse Practitioner. Lyn also makes to time to serve as a member of the Fayette County Board of Health and carries over twenty years experience in the nursing profession.



### **Sallie Bernard – Executive Director**

Sallie Bernard is a co-founder and the Executive Director of SafeMinds. She serves as the Chair of the Board of Directors of Cure Autism Now, one of the largest funders of biomedical research for autism. She was formerly the Executive Director of the New Jersey Chapter of Cure Autism Now, helping to secure millions of dollars in funding from the State of New Jersey for autism research and treatment. She was also a member of the Founders Forum for The Autism Center at UMDNJ in New Jersey.

Sallie has testified before Congress as well as made a presentation to the Institute of Medicine. She has published a number of research papers and letters in science journals, and participates in several government committees addressing the effect of mercury on neurodevelopment. Sallie is a co-founder and President of Extreme Sports Camp, a non-profit summer camp for older children and teenagers with autism. The camp offers outdoor sports and recreation including hiking, rock climbing, swimming, rafting, and water skiing.

Sallie is the founder and former president of ARC Research, a full service market research and marketing consulting firm which she sold in 2004. She graduated with honors from Radcliffe College, Harvard University, in 1979. She is married, with three children, one of whom has autism and lives in Aspen, Colorado with her family.



**Mark Blaxill, MBA – Vice-President**

Mark Blaxill is the Vice President of SafeMinds as well as serving on the research committee. Mark is the father of a daughter diagnosed with autism. He carries a Harvard MBA with distinction and a Princeton A.B. Summa Cum Laude. Mark has authored several publications on autism including: What's Going On? The Question of Time Trends in Autism (*Public Health Reports*, 2004), Reduced Mercury Levels in First Baby Haircuts of Autistic Children (*International Journal of Toxicology*, 2003), and Thimerosal and Autism? A Plausible Hypothesis That Should Not Be Dismissed (*Medical Hypotheses*, 2004).

Mark's affected child is named Michaela, and is the driving force for the time he spends working on the fight against autism. In Mark's own words, "One of the most gratifying aspects of this work is to see how much better she has become as we have pursued the interventions (diet, anti-inflammatory medication, detoxification, chelation, etc.) that have come from the parent community. My passion comes from the obvious emergency that autism presents to our country, one that our medical and scientific leaders have failed to face up to."



**Laura Bono – Board Member**

Laura Bono has actively advocated on behalf of autistic children and families since the early 1990s. Her focus is on helpful biomedical interventions as she lobbies Congress and our government agencies for effective scientific research to seek the cause, treatments, and a cure for autism.

Laura is working with members of Congress to increase National Institute for Health (NIH) funding for autism/mercury research and compel the Health & Human Services (HHS), to allow families to seek and receive compensation for their mercury poisoned children in the Vaccine Injury Compensation Program. She helped organize the Federal Office of Special Counsel investigation which requested Congress have hearings on the FDA and CDC regarding the link of mercury poisoning and vaccines. She has been interviewed by numerous magazines and newspapers, appeared on the *NBC Nightly News with Tom Brokaw* and *The Today Show*, and provided background research to *NBC Dateline*, *Meet the Press* and independent documentaries. Her advocacy has also included planning press conferences and rallies to focus the media on the link between vaccines containing thimerosal (mercury) and autism in children.

Laura is a Board Member, co-founder and Chairman Emeritus of the National Autism Association. She graduated cum laude from the University of South Carolina with a B.S. in Journalism with a minor in Marketing and has over 25 years business experience in marketing. The youngest of her three children, Jackson, is diagnosed with Pervasive Developmental Disorder - Not Otherwise Specified and heavy metal toxicity. Laura resides in Durham, NC with her family.



**Vicky Debold, R.N., Ph.D. – Board Member**

Dr. Debold has worked in the health care field for over 25 years and currently works as a consultant performing health services research and policy analysis related to patient safety. She has worked as a health policy analyst for the U.S. Congress, Physician Payment Review Commission, Michigan Health and Safety Coalition, and the Michigan State Commission on Patient Safety. Additionally, she was an Assistant Professor at the University of Michigan and an Associate Professor and Director of the Health Systems Management Program at the University of Detroit Mercy. Her doctoral degree is from the University of Michigan - School of Public Health (Health Services Organization and Policy) and School of Nursing (Health Systems Administration). She was a Regent's Fellow and completed a post-doctoral fellowship in health systems research.

Her 9 year-old son is named Samuel and he was diagnosed with an autism spectrum disorder in May 2000. Since that time, she has been actively involved in autism-related research, advocacy, and fundraising for several non-profit organizations.

**Daniel Hollenbeck – Board Member**

Daniel Hollenbeck serves on the SafeMind's research committee. He is the author of the Public Schools Autism Prevalence Report Series, which is used by autism advocates and educators across the country. As an autism advocate and technology wizard, he is very interested in applying technology in support of autism research, education, treatment, and advocacy.

In 2001, when his son was diagnosed with autism, Dan and his family relocated from Oregon to Pittsburgh so he could accept employment as an Information Technology Manager for a large NIH funded medical research organization. During this time, he co-founded Fighting Autism, a non-profit organization dedicated to improving the quality of life for children with autism through research, education, advocacy, and treatment. He currently serves as the Director of Fighting Autism.

Dan is the Information Technology Director for Thoughtful House, a center for children with development disorders. He received his Bachelor of Science degree in Electrical and Computer Engineering from the University of Wisconsin-Madison in 1992.



**Jim Moody, JD – Board Member**

Jim Moody chairs the government affairs committee of SafeMinds. He is the founder of Citizens for a Competitive Economy. Jim is a practicing attorney and is active in cause-related advocacy for children with autism.



**Theresa Wrangham – Board Member**

Ms. Wrangham is currently a stay-at-home mother of two daughters, Rachel, 16, who is diagnosed with Pervasive Developmental Disorder, Not Otherwise Specified (PDD-NOS) and Deanna who is 13. She is a co-founder of the Autism Society of Boulder County (ASBC) in Colorado; a chapter of the Autism Society of America. Theresa is ASBC's current President and Chair of the Board. In this role, she has successfully collaborated with other state agencies to create treatment programs for autistic individuals not included in state-funded programs, as well as influence legislation within the state of Colorado. With an extensive administrative and accounting background to draw on, Theresa will assist in maintaining SafeMinds' infrastructure and administrative proficiency. Theresa previously served on the board of the Autism Society of Colorado and her local PTA. Theresa believes that the grassroots voice of parents will assure strong programs and services, compassion and support for families and assure positive long-term outcomes for individuals affected by autism spectrum disorders.