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Statement from SafeMinds on Vaccine Court Autism Concession

(Boulder, CO) The Department of Health and Human Services recently conceded an autism case in the US Court of Federal Claims, Office of the Special Master, under the National Vaccine Injury Compensation Program (VICP). The Respondent's Report states that the vaccines administered to the claimant, a child diagnosed with autism, "significantly aggravated an underlying mitochondrial disorder, which predisposed her to deficits in cellular energy metabolism, and manifested as a regressive encephalopathy with features of autism spectrum disorder." Several of the vaccines contained mercury.

SafeMinds executive director, Sallie Bernard, expressed concern over this latest evidence of the link between autism, vaccines and mercury, stating, "the concession highlights the urgent need to study the adverse effects of childhood vaccines and the contribution to these effects by various vaccine components including the mercury-containing vaccine preservative thimerosal." Thimerosal was widely used in the 1990s and is still present in most infant doses of influenza vaccine as well as vaccines produced for developing countries.

The VICP case was reported in detail today by David Kirby, author of Evidence of Harm, on the Huffington Post website - http://www.huffingtonpost.com/david-kirby/government-concedes-vacci_b_88323.html. According to the article, the child was developing normally until given the vaccines, and shortly after the shots, she regressed into full autism. The child was diagnosed by nationally recognized autism medical specialists.

Mercury, including thimerosal, can trigger mitochondrial dysfunction, even at low doses. Mercury can also lead to oxidative stress and abnormal calcium signaling, both of which are key features of mitochondrial impairment. Several studies have found markers of increased oxidative stress, calcium imbalance, and mitochondrial dysfunction in autism subjects. Researchers from a variety of academic institutions suggest that a substantial portion of people with autism have underlying mitochondrial deficiency.

In response to news of this case, SafeMinds has compiled an extensive but not exhaustive library of science and medical articles on autism, mitochondria, and mercury. This information is available at www.safeminds.org.

Autism has reached epidemic proportions, now 1 in 150 children, at great cost to basic individual functioning, to families struggling for services and treatment, and to society which must provide resources for intensive education and other lifelong supports. "Our government is failing the public by avoiding unbiased investigations into the link between autism, vaccines, mercury, and other likely environmental triggers," said Bernard. "Instead of fighting families in vaccine court, the government should be spending the taxpayers' money on finding out why so many children are sick, even if these investigations prove an unpleasant theory regarding childhood vaccinations."