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From: Madalyn Schaefgen [mailto:mschaefgen@rcn.com]
Sent: Wednesday, September 12, 2007 8:39 PM
To: Wonderling, Senator Robert
Cc: Brubaker, Senator Michael; asandusky@pafp.com
Subject:

Dear Senator Wonderling,

I recently received an e mail from Andy Sandusky, Director of Governmental Affairs of the Pennsylvania Academy of Family Physicians (PAFP) asking for assistance in providing testimony to the Senate Agricultural and Rural Affairs Committee on the public health issue regarding the safety concerns with raw, non-pasteurized milk. I understand there will be a hearing on September 18. Although the PAFP is no longer needed to provide testimony, I would like to share with you my concern regarding the public health effects of non-pasteurized milk.

It is well known that pasteurization kills bacteria which spread illness. Pasteurization has been credited with dramatically reducing illness and death caused by contaminated milk over the last century. I am unsure why anyone would want to sell non-pasteurized milk, especially since it is young children, who are the most vulnerable to disease, who are the largest group of milk drinkers, and are the ones most affected by this decision. We need to protect those who are unable to protect themselves. Just as we try to prevent illness with requiring immunizations, and as we protect the public by inspecting restaurants to prevent spread of disease by unclean food preparation processes, we need to protect the general public by providing foods which are treated to reduce contamination with bacteria. Pasteurization is an easy, inexpensive process which does not alter the proteins in the milk, or interfere with the nutritional value.

As a child of a father who contracted Pott's disease (tuberculosis of the spine) at age 5 secondary to drinking non-pasteurized milk, I know personally of the effects of the problem. Only through progressive medicine and traumatic hospitalizations is my father alive today. Still, he has spent his life crippled by the disease. I would not wish that situation on anyone if it could be so easily avoided by pasteurization.

If I can be of any further assistance, please contact me.

Thanks.

Sincerely,

Madalyn Schaefgen, M.D.
Fellow of the American Academy of Family Physicians

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