

Voices For Vaccines
325 Swanton Way
Decatur, GA 30030

July 31, 2008

Katie Couric, Managing Editor
CBS Television Network
524 West 57th Street
6th Floor
New York, NY 10019-2902

Via Facsimile

Dear Ms. Couric:

Voices For Vaccines objects to the defamatory allegations made by the CBS Evening News on Friday, July 25, against the American Academy of Pediatrics, Every Child By Two, and the Vaccine Education Center at the Children's Hospital of Philadelphia, with our colleague Dr Paul Offit singled out for baseless criticism

It is our privilege to partner with these institutions in our mission to disseminate reliable information about vaccines. These groups advocate for immunization based on the overwhelming evidence for the lifesaving power of vaccination, and motivated by a sincere concern for the health of America's children. It is preposterous and deeply offensive for CBS to suggest otherwise by insinuating that the pharmaceutical industry improperly influences the views of these vaccine advocates

An obvious starting point for an unbiased reporter assigned to investigate this possibility would have been to determine whether the advocates' recommendations were in accord with the scientific consensus on immunization, as articulated by neutral bodies such as the World Health Organization and the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. (In fact, all three subjects of the CBS story do promote vaccination according to federal guidelines)

In contrast, Sharyl Attkisson relied solely upon tangential observations in concluding that the judgment of these respected authorities has been co-opted by drug companies. Ms Attkisson's choice to pursue her story even after failing to uncover any evidence of malfeasance reveals not bias on the part of the story's subjects, but on the part of Ms Attkisson herself. Professionalism required her to acknowledge that the targets of her story have done nothing other than emphasize to the public that which is well known to science: that vaccines allow children to grow up safe and healthy.

(page 2)

We call upon CBS to issue a retraction of Ms. Attkisson's report and an apology to the individuals and institutions whose good and honorable work in the field of immunization has been smeared. We further ask CBS to reflect upon the fact that it does not befit a user of the public airwaves to broadcast misleading claims about the most important public health measure of our time

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Lisa H. Randall".

Lisa H. Randall
Interim Executive Director
(404) 592-1408
lrandall@voicesforvaccines.org

cc: Katie Boyle, Senior Producer
Jonathan LaPook, MD, Medical Correspondent
Sharyl Attkisson, Reporter