

April 18, 2011

O. Marion Burton, MD, FAAP  
President  
American Academy of Pediatrics  
142 Northwest Point Boulevard  
Elk Grove Village, IL 60007-1098

Dear Dr. Burton:

The National Vaccine Information Center (NVIC) has learned that you may have written in your capacity as President of the American Academy of Pediatrics (AAP), a letter dated April 13, 2011 to Mr. Wally Kelly, of CBS Television, pressuring the network to “remove” the 15-second message sponsored by NVIC. This paid message has been shown on the CBS Jumbotron on Times Square since March 22 and will continue to be shown through April 28.

The letter to CBS, purportedly on behalf of the “AAP’s 60,000 member pediatricians” (copy below) was publicly posted on the Internet on April 13 by an anonymous blogger at <http://autism-news-beat.com/archives/1577> and was republished by another anonymous blogger on April 15 at <http://skepticalteacher.wordpress.com/2011/04/09/alert-demand-that-cbs-not-air-outdoor-anti-vaccine-ad/>.

The statements about the National Vaccine Information Center in this publicly posted letter addressed to CBS are false and harmful. They need to be corrected promptly.

The National Vaccine Information Center (NVIC), founded in 1982 by parents of DPT vaccine injured children, has a long and substantive record of responsible consumer advocacy that began with our work with the U.S. Congress to include vaccine safety, informed consent and injury compensation provisions in the National Childhood Vaccine Injury Act of 1986. During the past three decades, I and other NVIC representatives have served as invited consumer members on government vaccine advisory committees, Institute of Medicine vaccine safety committees and vaccine stakeholder public engagement initiatives created to improve vaccine safety science and public health policymaking.

As co-founder and president of NVIC, I have personally worked to include informed consent protections in vaccine policies and encourage shared vaccine decision-making between parents and pediatricians. These efforts have included meetings with the participation of representatives from the American Academy of Pediatrics.

As a non-profit charitable organization dedicated to preventing vaccine injuries and deaths through public education, NVIC's public service record of responsibly advocating for well-informed vaccine decision-making is unmatched. Prominently featured on the Resource pages of NVIC's website – [www.NVIC.org](http://www.NVIC.org) - are links to the website of the American Academy of Pediatrics (AAP), Immunization Action Coalition (IAC), Institute for Vaccine Safety at Johns Hopkins Bloomberg School of Public Health, The Food and Drug Administration (FDA), Centers for Disease Control (CDC), Health Resources Services Administration (HRSA) and Morbidity & Mortality Weekly Report (MMWR). The information published by NVIC on vaccines and infectious diseases is heavily referenced, often with citations linking to studies published in the medical literature and information published by federal health agencies and the vaccine manufacturers.

As a consumer organization advocating education and defending the informed consent principle, NVIC does not give medical advice. Instead, NVIC encourages health care consumers to become fully informed about the risks and complications of infectious diseases and the risks and complications of vaccines and to speak with one or more trusted health care professionals before making a decision about vaccination. This is the public position NVIC has taken consistently since our founding in 1982.

The April 13, 2011 letter attributed to you and posted online, states that *“By providing advertising space to an organization like NVIC, which opposes the nation’s recommended childhood immunization schedule and promotes the unscientific practice of delaying or skipping vaccines altogether, you are putting the lives of children at risk, leaving them unprotected from vaccine-preventable diseases.”* This factually incorrect statement is harmful to the reputation of NVIC, a consumer-led organization that neither “opposes” nor advocates adherence to a “recommended childhood immunization schedule” and which does not “promote” delaying or skipping vaccines because, unlike the AAP, NVIC does not give medical advice to individuals but encourages informed medical decision making.

I am surprised that the President of the American Academy of Pediatrics may have made these inaccurate statements about NVIC in a clumsy attempt to strong arm a national television network into removing a 15-second message that only advises health care consumers to become educated about vaccines and exercise their right to informed consent to medical procedures. Irresponsible statements of that sort by an organization that represents our Nation's

pediatricians does little to encourage public trust in those responsible for administering vaccines to children.

I ask that you issue a public statement no later than April 20, 2011 that either disavows responsibility for the April 13 letter to CBS or retracts the letter's damaging statements about NVIC so that the harm can be mitigated.

Sincerely,



Barbara Loe Fisher  
Co-founder & President

cc: Robert W. Block, MD, President-Elect, AAP  
Judith W. Palfrey, MD, Immediate Past President, AAP  
Errol R. Alden, MD, Executive Director, AAP  
Wally Kelly, Chairman & CEO, CBS Outdoor

*April 13, 2011*

*Mr. Wally Kelly, Chairman and CEO  
CBS Outdoor 405 Lexington Ave., 14th floor  
New York, NY 10174*

*Dear Mr. Kelly,*

*The American Academy of Pediatrics (AAP) objects to the paid advertisement/public service message from the National Vaccine Information Center (NVIC) being shown throughout the month of April on the CBS JumboTron in Times Square, New York. The AAP and many other child health organizations have worked hard to protect children and their families from unfounded and unscientific misinformation regarding vaccine safety. Vaccines are safe.*

*By providing advertising space to an organization like the NVIC, which opposes the nation's recommended childhood immunization schedule and promotes the unscientific practice of delaying or skipping vaccines altogether, you are putting the lives of children at risk, leaving them unprotected from vaccine-preventable diseases.*

*Diseases like measles and pertussis (whooping cough) can have serious consequences, including seizures, brain damage and even death. From January 1 through December 31, 2010, 9,477 cases of pertussis (including ten infant deaths) were reported throughout California. This is the most cases reported in 65 years there.*

*The AAP's 60,000 member pediatricians urge you to remove these harmful messages, which fail to inform the public about the safety of life-saving vaccines. Please do your part to help reassure parents that vaccinating their children on schedule is the best way to protect them from deadly diseases.*

*Sincerely,*

*O. Marion Burton, MD, FAAP  
President*