March 30, 2004

Karen Strambler
Office of Policy
Office of the Commissioner
Food and Drug Administration
5600 Fishers Lane
Rockville, MD 20857

RE: Docket # 2004N-0115

Dear Ms. Strambler:

My name is Rick Roberts. As a victim of counterfeit drugs, I would like the opportunity to testify for five minutes before the Food and Drug Administration's April 14, 2004 hearing on the importation of prescription drugs [Docket # 2004N-0115].

In 1988, I was diagnosed with AIDS Related Complex. In 2000, I began taking a 12-month cycle of Serostim (Human Growth Hormone) to fight against my AIDS Wasting Syndrome. Toward the end of my year on Serostim, I noticed some subtle changes in the packaging and quantity of the drug, and experienced a burning sensation at the injection site. After much investigation – including contacting my pharmacist (a national chain drugstore), Serono (the manufacturer of Serostim) and the FDA – I learned that I had received counterfeit Serostim. What I had been injecting was, in fact, a female fertility drug.

I would like the opportunity to share my experience with counterfeit drugs, concerns about our current system that this exposed, and precautions the FDA should consider as it weighs the safety of allowing foreign drug importation. I would strongly urge the FDA to do more to ensure the medications American's get are safe, rather than lowering our safety standards and exposing more Americans to counterfeits.

My contact/affiliation details are as follows:

Name: Rick C. Roberts
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Affiliations: Professor, University of San Francisco; Board member, Andrew Ziegler Foundation

Please call or email me if you have any questions, and please do let me know when my testimony is scheduled. Thank you very much for your consideration of my request.

Sincerely,

Rick C. Roberts