June 18, 2009

Ms. Mary K. Engle  
Associate Director  
Advertising Practices  
Federal Trade Commission  
600 Pennsylvania Avenue, NW  
Washington, DC 20580  

Dear Ms. Engle,

We are writing to express our support for the Center for Science in the Public Interest’s complaint that Bayer Healthcare is making misleading claims in its ads and on its Web site about the role of selenium in preventing prostate cancer.

The seven-year Selenium and Vitamin E Cancer Prevention Trial (SELECT) produced strong evidence last October that selenium does not prevent prostate cancer in a generally healthy, heterogeneous population of men in the United States and Canada. This Federally-financed study was the largest individually randomized cancer prevention trial ever conducted, and, given its high rates of adherence and its statistical power, it is unlikely to have missed detecting a benefit of even a very modest size.

Bayer Healthcare is doing a disservice to men by misleading them about a protective role for selenium in prostate cancer. We ask that you take whatever steps are necessary to halt these ads as soon as possible.

Sincerely,

Peter H. Gann, MD, ScD  
Director of the Division of Pathology Research  
University of Illinois at Chicago

Michael J. Thun, MD, MS  
Vice President Emeritus  
Epidemiology and Surveillance Research  
American Cancer Society

Edward Giovannucci, MD, ScD  
Professor of Nutrition and Epidemiology  
Harvard School of Public Health

Tim Byers, MD, MPH  
Program Leader for Clinical Cancer Prevention and Control
University of Colorado Cancer Center.

Lawrence H. Kushi, Sc.D.
Associate Director for Etiology & Prevention Research
Kaiser Permanente
Oakland, CA

Laurence N. Kolonel, M.D., Ph.D.
Deputy Director
Cancer Research Center of Hawaii
University of Hawaii

Maarten C. Bosland, DVSc, PhD
Professor of Pathology
University of Illinois at Chicago
College of Medicine

Alan R. Kristal, Dr. PH
Public Health Sciences Division
Cancer Prevention
Fred Hutchinson Cancer Research Center

William G. Nelson, M.D., Ph.D.
Professor of Oncology, Medicine, Pathology, Pharmacology and Molecular Sciences, Urology
Johns Hopkins Medical Institutions

Note: Those signing the letter are doing so personally and not as representatives of their institutions. The signers’ affiliations are provided for information purposes only.