CONSORTA

March 13, 2009

Yves Chartier, World Health Organization
Joshua Karliner, Health Care Without Harm
WHO/HCWH Mercury-Free Health Care Partnership
c/o Salud sin Daño/HCWH International Coordination
Tamborini 2838
1429 Capital Federal
Argentina

Dear Ms and Mr. Chartier and Karliner,

Thank you for the invitation to join the Mercury-Free Health Care Partnership, co-led by World Health Organization and Health Care Without Harm.

We understand that this global partnership aims to achieve virtual elimination of mercury-based thermometers and sphygmomanometers over the next decade and their substitution with accurate, economically viable alternatives.

We also understand that this initiative is a component of the UN Environment Programme's Mercury Products Partnership, which is led by the US Environmental Protection Agency. As such, this health care initiative is contributing to a broader effort to promote environmental health by reducing the amount of mercury emitted into the global environment.

Our institution, Consorta, Inc., which is a group purchasing organization, combines purchasing volume from our membership and works with various vendors to write contracts for the products and services our members purchase to provide high quality care to their patients and the community they serve across the country.

Consorta members have expressed concern regarding mercury based products for many years. With mercury having an evidence base effect as a neurotoxin, our hospitals were compelled to be proactive in eliminating mercury based blood pressure devices in their facilities.

In early 2003, the nursing committee at Consorta was in the process of reviewing research, content, and the breath of product lines available for sphygmomanometers for a new contract. A clear direction was given by our membership to eliminate mercury containing products from the contract. At this time, only aneroid and electronic devices were placed on contract. Even looking at the cost of replacement and disposal, most health systems felt this was the right thing to do for their patients and staff. The trend was set for most facilities to move towards digital electronic blood pressure devices.

As our experience with our hospital members has demonstrated, cost effective viable alternatives to mercury blood pressure devices are available in the marketplace. We support the goal of mercury free healthcare and believe efforts by the European Union and the World Health Organization to phase-out the sale and export of mercury blood pressure devices will be an important step for human health and the environment.

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I write you today to accept your invitation and express our willingness to join the Partnership,

As part of the Mercury-Free Health Care Partnership we will continue our efforts by educating our membership on the effects of mercury and the availability of alternatives in the marketplace.

We look forward to collaborating with you in this most important effort.

Sincerely,

Darrel Weatherford, President and CEO
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Cc:

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