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U.S. FDA: Cell Phone Radiation Is Safe

July 6... The **FDA** has closed down its Web site, Cell Phone Facts: Consumer Information on Wireless Phones. In its place, the agency has posted a few Web **pages** to assure the public that RF radiation from mobile phones is safe.

The new text on the **Health Issues** page is limited to just 330 words. It opens: “Many people are concerned that cell phone radiation will cause cancer or other serious health hazards. The weight of scientific evidence has not linked cell phones with any health problems.” Even in the small amount of space devoted to the topic, the FDA reiterates this no-risk message over and over again. In the second paragraph, the agency advises: “The majority of studies published have failed to show an association between exposure to RF from a cell phone and health problems.” And, does it once more in the next paragraph: “Whereas high levels of RF can produce health effects (by heating tissue), exposure to low-level RF that does not produce heating effects causes no known adverse health effects.”

The FDA is taking no chances. The same theme is repeated many more times. Here’s the FDA on:

Children and Cell Phones: “The scientific evidence does not show a danger to any users of cell phones from RF exposure, including children and teenagers”;

Reducing Exposures: “If there is a risk from being exposed to radiofrequency energy (RF) from cell phones—and at this point we do not know that there is—it is probably very small”;

and

Research: “Is there a connection between RF and certain health problems? The results of most studies conducted to date say no. In addition, attempts to replicate and confirm the few studies that have shown a connection have failed.”

The old Web pages included references to new research studies, especially those from the **Interphone** study. These have all been deleted. The brief discussion of risks to children cites the **Stewart report**, issued nine years ago (*MWN*, **M/J00**, p.1). (It was the first to advise that children should be discouraged from using cell phones.) The FDA dismisses this warning too: “[The Stewart report’s] recommendation to limit cell phone use by children was strictly precautionary; it was not based on scientific evidence that any health hazard exists.” The FDA

(continued on p.2)

does not mention the similar advice given by high-level groups in Finland, France, Germany and Russia, among others, based on epidemiological studies that point to higher tumor risks among long-term users (see our [post of January 23, 2009](#)).

The original Cell Phone Facts Web site was set up in 2001 jointly by the FDA and the [FCC](#) in response to criticisms from the [General Accountability Office](#) (GAO), the investigative arm of the U.S. Congress. In its [report](#), the GAO faulted the two agencies for failing to provide the public with “clear and concise information” on cell-phone health issues (see [MWN, M/J01](#), p.6). The report was requested by Sen. [Joe Lieberman](#) (D-CT) and [Rep. Ed Markey](#) (D-MA), both of whom are still in Congress.

The decision to eliminate most of the information on the Cell Phone Facts Web pages was made by the FDA, sources told *Microwave News*. Now that they are gone, the FCC offers more information on its Web site than does the FDA—see the FCC’s [Frequently Asked Questions on RF Safety](#). (Under the law, the FDA has the lead authority to address cell phone radiation risks.) The FCC Web pages still have many links to the Cell Phone Facts Web site, all of which now lead to the same dead end.

This spring, [Abiy Desta](#), who serves as FDA’s point man on cell phone safety, set up the RF Bioeffects Technical Group to update the agency’s assessment of RF health risks. As part of that process, Desta solicited opinions from various “stakeholders.” Among those invited were [Cindy Sage](#) and [David Carpenter](#), who led the team that put together the [BioInitiative Report](#). “The meeting itself was not unpleasant, just not in any way substantial,” Carpenter told us. “There was no indication that there would be actions of any consequence.”

“David and I flew to Washington in April, to persuade the FDA to update its Web site. We felt it should take into account all the new tumor studies and issue tougher warn-

ing statements like the rest of the world is doing,” Sage said in an interview. “I never dreamed they would gut it.”

Desta declined to comment. Instead, he referred *Microwave News* to Siobhan DeLancey in the FDA Office of Public Affairs. She would only say that many of the old links no longer work because the Web site had been redesigned.

The FDA as a Public Health Agency

July 7... Last month, [Margaret Hamburg](#), the new commissioner of the FDA, and [Joshua Sharfstein](#), her principal deputy commissioner, published a commentary in the *New England Journal of Medicine* under the title, “The FDA as a Public Health Agency.” Here is a short excerpt:

“[O]ne of the greatest challenges facing any public health agency is that of risk communication. ... The FDA’s job is to minimize risks through education, regulation, and enforcement. To be credible in all these tasks, the agency must communicate frequently and clearly about risks and benefits—and about what organizations and individuals can do to minimize risk. When, like the FDA, Americans must make choices about medication, devices, foods, or nutrition in the absence of perfect information, the FDA cannot delay in providing reasonable guidance—guidance that informs rather than causes unnecessary anxiety. For these communications to have credibility, the public must trust the agency to base its decisions on science.”

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Two Reviews from ICNIRP

July 14... The International Commission on Non-Ionizing Radiation Protection (**ICNIRP**) has released two new reviews on RF radiation: (1) Exposure to High-Frequency Electromagnetic Fields, Biological Effects and Health Consequences (100kHz-300GHz), and (2) Epidemiologic Evidence on Mobile Phones and Tumor Risk: A Review.”

The first is a 372-page review that addresses all aspects of RF interactions, from dosimetry to in vitro and in vivo experiments to epidemiological studies. It was prepared by the full commission and its advisory committees. The full text of the **report** is available at no charge from the ICNIRP Web site. Here is the conclusion on the plausibility of non-thermal effects:

Recent concern has been more with exposure to the lower level RF radiation characteristic of mobile phone use. Whilst it is in principle impossible to disprove the possible existence of non-thermal interactions, the plausibility of various non-thermal mechanisms that have been proposed is very low.

and on cancer and genotoxic effects:

Concerning cancer-related effects, the recent in vitro and animal genotoxicity and carcinogenicity studies are rather consistent overall and indicate that such effects are unlikely at SAR levels up to 4 W/Kg.

The review of the epidemiological studies was written by ICNIRP’s standing committee on epidemiology and will appear in the September issue of *Epidemiology*. An advance copy of the **paper** has been posted on the journal’s Web site. In this case, only the abstract is free to those who do not subscribe to *Epidemiology*. Members of the ICNIRP epi group include **Anders Ahlbom**, **Maria Feychting** and **Tony Swerdlow**; all three are working on the **Interphone** project and have been identified as members of the study team who are skeptical of a cell-phone tumor risk. The three other authors are Australia’s **Adele Green**, **Leeka Kheifets**, who has longstanding ties to **EPRI**, the electric industry research group, and **David Savitz**, best known to the EMF community for replicating the Wertheimer-Leeper power line-childhood leukemia study in the 1980s. (Note that Ahlbom stepped down from ICNIRP last year and was replaced by Feychting, his former student and now colleague.) The group concludes:

“In our opinion, overall the studies published to date do not demonstrate a raised risk within approximately 10 years of use for any tumor of the brain or any other head tumor. However, some key methodologic problems remain—for example, selective nonresponse and exposure misclassification. Despite these methodologic shortcomings and the still limited data on long latency and long-term use, the available data do not suggest a causal association between mobile phone use and fast-growing tumors such as malignant glioma in adults, at least those tumors with short induction periods. For slow-growing tumors such as meningioma and acoustic neuroma, as well as for glioma among long-term users, the absence of associations reported thus far is less conclusive because the current observation period is still too short. Currently data are completely lacking on the potential carcinogenic effect of exposures in childhood and adolescence.”

The latter paper is accompanied by a commentary in the same issue of *Epidemiology*.

Ken Rothman on Cell Phone Risks: Accidents and Tumors

July 22... In a just-released **commentary**, **Ken Rothman**, one of the best-known names in epidemiology, explores two of the most contentious issues related to mobile phone health risks: (1) If cell phones do lead to an increased incidence of brain tumors, when would we expect to begin to see it? And (2) How do we explain the differences between the findings of the **Interphone** project and those of **Lennart Hardell’s** research group?

Rothman’s commentary accompanies **ICNIRP’s** **review** of the mobile phone epidemiological literature (see **July 14**, above). Both will appear in the September issue of *Epidemiology*. Advance copies have been posted on the journal’s Web site. Rothman’s commentary is a free download.

Rothman, the founder and editor emeritus of *Epidemiology*, has long been involved in cell-phone health research. Indeed, he is a pioneer in the field. He led one of the **first studies** on mortality of mobile phone users close to 15 years ago and wrote one of the first **reviews** to be published in a major journal (*The Lancet*). Much of his work was sponsored by the cell phone industry through Wireless Technology Research (WTR), George Carlo’s infamous outfit.

(Rothman paid dearly for this association, but that's a story for another time.) Over the last decade, Rothman has been a member of the Interphone International Scientific Oversight Committee.

In 1999, Rothman was also one of the first to document the hazards of using a cell phone while driving (in the *Journal of the American Medical Association*). Today, he thinks that this is, at least for now, the paramount public health issue. While Rothman does not dismiss the possibility that RF radiation affects the growth and development of tumor cells, he would direct more attention to the "most important health effect of using mobile telephones," which, he states, "is likely to be the result of behavioral change related to attention span."

Rothman's timing is impeccable. Last Sunday, two days after his commentary was posted on the *Epidemiology* Web site, the *New York Times* kicked off a special report—"Driven to Distraction"—on the well-documented hazards of using a cell phone or some other wireless gadget while behind the wheel. Sunday's story, "**Dismissing the Risks of a Deadly Habit**," took up much of the top of the front page and continued on two full pages inside. In a **follow-up** story on Tuesday (July 21), also on the front page, the *Times* reported that the National Highway Traffic Safety Administration had suppressed "hundreds of pages of research and warnings about the use of phones by drivers." Those documents are now available on the newspaper's **Web site**.

With respect to RF radiation, Anders Ahlbom and the other members of ICNIRP's epidemiology committee highlight the absence of a tumor link in the short or intermediate term in their review. "Overall the studies published to date do not demonstrate an increased risk within approximately ten years of use for any tumor of the brain or any other head tumor," they write. But what happens in the long term? As Rothman points out: "Skeptics might rightly take this as only mild reassurance, because induction times for radiation caused tumors often exceed ten years."

Here too, Rothman has some previous experience. It turns out that close to 30 years ago Rothman wrote about precisely this problem: doing epidemiological studies on effects that may have long latency times. In 1981, he **predicted**, quite presciently, that, "[W]e can expect ... a growing interest in the timing between cause and disease." In his new commentary, Rothman writes that we can tell something about long-term risks based on the shorter-term epi

data we have in hand:

"[E]ven for carcinogens that induce cancer with very long average induction times, a causal effect should produce some increase in risk much earlier than the average induction time. Therefore, the absence of an effect for the first ten years after exposure should have implications that extend beyond that time."

That is, he agrees with the Ahlbom/ICNIRP view that, from what we know now, if there is a long-term tumor risk, it's unlikely to be large.

Rothman also favors Ahlbom's argument against putting much weight on the five-country Interphone **finding** of a long-term brain tumor (glioma) risk on the side of the head the phone was used—even though it was statistically significant, albeit by the thinnest of margins. Why? Because there is no overall elevated risk among long-term users. Instead, the higher observed risk is more likely due to recall bias. Rothman made the same point in an exchange with Hardell and **Kjell Hansson Mild** eight years ago: "[A]n absence of any increase in risk coupled with a doubtful result about laterality leaves room for much skepticism about a causal interpretation," he wrote in *The Lancet*.

And how do we explain Hardell's results pointing to a tumor risk? Rothman has no easy answers and does not take sides. He leaves open the question as to who will be proved right in the end:

"Ahlbom et al identified no single methodologic problem that could explain the difference between the studies by Hardell and the results from the other studies. ... [W]e should keep in mind that even if methodologic subtleties could explain the difference between the studies of Hardell and the other studies in the literature, without more information we cannot know whether to exclude the studies from Hardell or to exclude the other studies and retain Hardell's."

One way to look at the Ahlbom/ICNIRP review is that this is the paper that the Interphone team might have written had it not been for those other project members who do not believe that the risks can be easily explained away (see our "**Interphone Project: The Cracks Begin To Show**"). Rothman's commentary tells us that when those who say there is nothing to fear put forward their best case, it's not enough. More work must be done before the controversy over radiation-induced tumor risks will be resolved.

French RF Program To Cut Links to Mobile Phone Industry

July 29... A consensus has emerged in France that the national RF research program should cut its ties to the mobile phone industry. Manufacturers and operators would however continue to help pay for health and environmental research. This new outlook emerged from a month-long (April 23–May 25) review (**round table**) of government policies on RF radiation with the participation of no fewer than three cabinet ministers—for health, environment and the digital economy.

The **Foundation for Health and Radiofrequencies**, founded in 2005, has run the French RF research and public information efforts under a five-year mandate and a budget of 4.8 million (~US\$6.7 million), with equal contributions from government and industry. It has sponsored **26 projects** including the French groups working on the **Interphone** and **MOBI-Kids** studies.

Now, the future of the Foundation is in doubt, at least under its present structure. In its **final report**, the members of the round table affirm the need for more research and for a research-coordinating group, but criticize the Foundation for having industry representatives—but none from citizen groups—on its **Board of Directors**. Alcatel-Lucent, Bouygues Telecom, Orange France, SFR and TDF all have seats of the board.

At the same time, the report proclaims the government's commitment to nurture a culture of precaution, to increase public information and to review health standards. It makes a special point that the needs of those who are electro-sensitive must be addressed. The report covers a lot of other ground, notably policies on mobile phone towers and on the use of phones by children. They are all summarized in the government's **ten-point program**. (See also "**Cell Phones & Kids**," January 23.)

On July 7, **Chantal Jouanno**, the minister for the environment, **announced** the formation of a new committee to implement the recommendations of the round table, with its work to be completed by April 2010. Three days later, the committee's working group on research held its first meeting with **Jocelyne Boudot** of the Ministry of Health serving as its chair. No final decisions were made, according to Françoise Boudin, the director of the Foundation and a member of the working group. But there was agreement that some new entity was needed to coordinate RF research. "It cannot be the Foundation," Boudin told *Microwave News*, "because the board of directors should be independent from the industry." Jean-François Lacronique,

the chairman of the Foundation's board of directors also sits on the working group.

A few days before the working group meeting, the Foundation's **Scientific Advisory Committee** issued a **press release** calling on the government to make a "strong commitment" to an independent and world-class RF research program. Without it, the committee threatened to resign en masse on October 22, immediately following its **second scientific conference**, which will be held in Paris, October 20-21. This threat now seems somewhat moot since whatever replaces the Foundation will no doubt pick its own science advisors.

Ironically, even though the Foundation's days appear to be numbered because of the board's links to industry, it enjoys more support from activists than from industry. "The Foundation is a genuine scientific agency," said Daniel Oberhausen, a physicist in Bordeaux, who is an advisor to **Priartem**, a national citizens' association with headquarters in Paris. "The future of French research is not yet clear," he told *Microwave News*. "In my opinion, a new foundation should be created, possibly at an international level." Priartem did not always look so favorably on the Foundation—some groups still don't—but came around on realizing that a dialogue between them was possible.

For its part, the industry became disenchanted with the Foundation after it made a series of strategic errors, for instance, alienating the scientific establishment by not consulting members of the Academy of Medicine, among other august bodies, and for spending too much money on research and not enough on public information.

In a July 10 **interview** with the *Journal de l'Environnement*, a Web-based daily, **Martine Hours**, the chair of Foundation's Scientific Advisory Committee said that she is not opposed to a new organizational structure, but added that "no credible alternative has yet been proposed." She challenged the notion that the industry had had any influence on the Foundation's research agenda. Hours, an epidemiologist at **INRETS**, the French National Institute for Transport and Safety Research, leads the French Interphone group.

In the end, however, all this may be little more than a tempest in a teapot. Hours and the other members of the scientific advisory board question whether the government has the political will to raise the money for more research. If not, the call for a new industry-free outfit to run the French RF program may simply be a red herring.

Keep That Phone Out of Your Trousers Pocket!

August 16... It's the strongest warning yet. **John Aitken**, a well-known fertility researcher, is advising men who want to have children not to keep active mobile phones below their waists. This issue, he says, "deserves our immediate attention."

Aitken's research group at the University of Newcastle in Australia has found that human sperm exposed to mobile phone radiation (1.8GHz) for 16 hours had reduced vitality and motility, two key indices of fertility. Notably, he has also confirmed his own previous **study**, published in 2005, which showed that RF radiation could lead to DNA damage. In that earlier experiment, he had exposed mice to 900MHz signals and then looked at the animals' sperm, in contrast to the new study in which he exposed semen collected from human volunteers.

The new data show striking dose responses for all three effects over a wide range of SARs—above 0.4W/Kg and up to 27.5W/Kg. The changes in motility and vitality became statistically significant at 1 W/Kg and the DNA damage at 2.8 W/Kg. In all cases, the statistical reliability of the effects became much more significant with higher SARs. These new results appear in a **paper** published on July 31 in *PLoS ONE*, a Web-based, peer-reviewed journal. All **Public Library of Science journals** offer free access to all.

"After 16 hours exposure, there was clear evidence of DNA damage," Aitken **said** at a fertility conference in Brisbane last fall when he first presented these findings. Aitken is the director of the Australian Research Council's **Center of Excellence in Biotechnology and Development**.

"Several independent lines of evidence suggest that RF-EMR has the potential to influence semen quality and could be an important contributor to DNA damage in the male germ line," Aitken told *Microwave News*. He said that he would like to see more studies done, especially ones with the statistical power to determine whether RF can indeed affect male fertility.

In an **interview** published last month, **Martine Hours**, the chief science advisor to the **French RF research program**, also called for more fertility studies.

Importantly, Aitken also demonstrates a "potential causative mechanism" as to how RF radiation can lead to DNA damage. He acknowledges that cell phone signals do not have enough energy to directly break chemical bonds, but,

he goes on, "[T]his form of radiation may have other effects on larger scale systems such as cells and organelles, which stem from the perturbation of charged molecules and the disruption of electron flow." Specifically he believes that the RF can cause leakage of electrons from the mitochondria and produce reactive oxygen species (**ROS**), which in turn can attack DNA. This process, he states, is unrelated to thermal stress.

Over a decade ago in a **follow-up** to their landmark 1995 **study** which showed that RF radiation can lead to DNA breaks in the brains of exposed rats, **Henry Lai** and **N.P. Singh** showed that the DNA breaks were caused by free radicals. (For more on EMFs and DNA damage, see the recent **review** by Lai, Singh and **Jerry Phillips** of the University of Colorado in Colorado Springs.)

Aitken found an analogous dose-response relationship for the production of free radicals with increasing SAR—a highly significant one—to the ones for motility, vitality and DNA damage. "[T]he profiles of all the observed effects with respect to SAR were intriguingly similar, suggesting a common underlying mechanism," Aitken writes.

Another of Aitken's results may also be quite meaningful: Only a subset of the sperm cells was vulnerable to RF-induced oxidative stress. "[A]ll of the responses examined showed an extremely rapid change at low SAR exposures that then reached a plateau at a point where around 30% of the sperm population was affected," Aitken reports, but he is quick to add, "[T]his does not mean that a majority of spermatozoa would not, ultimately, be affected by RF-EMR in vivo." It might well depend on the duration of the exposure, he says.

These new results from Australia are consistent with those of **Ashok Agarwal** and coworkers at the Cleveland Clinic in Ohio. In a **paper** published last year in *Fertility and Sterility*, Agarwal also reported decreases in sperm motility and viability and increases in ROS in human semen. He concluded, "[K]eeping [a] cell phone in a trouser pocket in talk mode may negatively affect spermatozoa and impair male fertility." Yet, in a subsequent **interview** with *Newsweek*, when he was asked where he kept his phone, Agarwal replied: "In my pants pocket." Because, he explained, he does not use a hands-free set (the phone is on standby, not talk mode, there, resulting in less exposure). And because "I already have two children."

Agarwal had previously observed an association between semen quality and cell phone use among men who had visited an infertility clinic. "Semen analysis ... showed a decrease in sperm count, motility, viability, and normal morphology with the increase in daily use of cell phone," he reported in that earlier **paper**, also published in *Fertility*

and Sterility. (For a piece on U.S. press coverage of some of Agarwal's early RF-fertility work, see our [posts of October 26 and 27, 2006](#).)

In the last few years, a second U.S. group (in [Wisconsin](#)) as well as others in [Hungary](#), [Poland](#) and [Turkey](#)—that makes five countries in all—have all shown detrimental effects of cell-phone use or cell-phone radiation on sperm.

In his 2005 paper on the effects of RF radiation on mice, Aitken suggested that one possible implication of his findings is that the EMF link to childhood leukemia seen in residential epidemiological studies may in fact be due to their fathers' radiation exposure. He picks up this theme in his new *PLoS ONE* paper:

“[T]he fact that sperm DNA is damaged by this form of radiation has additional implications for the health and wellbeing of children born to fathers who have experienced high levels of occupational or environmental exposure to RF-EMR around the time of conception.”

More On Fertility

August 17... Make that research teams in six countries, not five, that have implicated cell phones in causing harm to male fertility (see yesterday's post). Last December, a group led by Nader Salama at Japan's [Tokushima University](#) medical school [reported](#) that the sperm of rabbits, whose testes were exposed to 800MHz radiation for eight hours a day for 12 weeks, had lower counts and motility, as well as changes in the biological structures where the sperm is formed ([Seminiferous tubules](#)). The counts and motility stayed relatively stable for the first few weeks and then, in each case, took a sudden, big drop—in week six for counts and week eight for motility.

Salama used actual GSM phones in *standby* mode, which would mean relatively low exposures. This prompted Germany's [Alex Lerchl](#) to express his “severe concerns” about the “exposure conditions” as well as the “reported biological effects.” His [letter to the editor](#) of the *International Journal of Andrology*, was posted on journal's Web site on August 10. In his [reply](#), Salama, who is now at the Alexandria Faculty of Medicine in Egypt, stood by the results as originally published. Lerchl has emerged as a frequent and aggressive critic of those who publish papers showing mobile phone effects. For some time, he has tried to force the retraction of [two papers](#) from Hugo Rüdiger's lab at the Medical University of Vienna showing cell-phone radiation induced DNA breaks. To date, Rüdiger has refused.

Senator Arlen Specter Said To Hold a Cell Phone Hearing

August 18... Senator [Arlen Specter](#) (D-PA) will hold a hearing on cell phones and health on September 14. So says Devra Davis, an activist scientist at the University of Pittsburgh. If Specter follows through, it would be the centerpiece of a conference she is organizing that week in Washington, as well as a triumph for Davis herself. She is on a mission to make cell phones a more visible public health issue in the U.S. and to secure funding for a major research program. It would be the first time in more than 30 years that the U.S. Senate has addressed RF/microwave health risks.

“I have spoken and met with Senator Specter and his senior staffers,” Davis told *Microwave News*. “They are planning to hold a hearing on this important topic.” Among those who will be invited to testify, she said, are [Frank Barnes](#) of the University of Colorado, Boulder, [Margaret Hamburg](#), the commissioner of the FDA, [Dariusz Leszczynski](#) of Finland's radiation protection agency ([STUK](#)), Israeli epidemiologist [Siegal Sadetzki](#), a member of the [Interphone](#) group, as well as Davis herself. Barnes served as the chairman of the committee that prepared the 2008 National Academy of Sciences-National Research Council [report](#) on research needs on potential impacts of wireless radiation. Leszczynski is helping to organize the conference and Sadetzki is on its steering committee.

Davis is confident enough to have included the Specter hearing in the draft agenda of the conference, which she has posted on the Web site of the [Environmental Health Trust](#), an offshoot of the [Devra Lee Davis Charitable Foundation](#). The *Expert Conference on Cell Phones and Public Policy Questions* will be held September 13-15 at the Credit Union House, which is strategically located “within walking distance of the Senate.”

Davis said that the official invitations for the meeting have not yet been sent out due to “press of health care issues.” She cautioned, “Of course, the timing of events in Washington are difficult to predict.” Specter is deeply involved in the health care reform debate and is facing a tough reelection campaign. A picture of him being confronted by an angry constituent at a town hall meeting was on the front-page of the *New York Times* last week with a story headlined, “[Senator Goes Face to Face with Dissent](#).” Specter is a [brain tumor survivor](#); he is also fighting [Hodgkin's](#)

disease.

John Myers, a Specter legislative aide, did not respond to a request for confirmation that the hearing will be held on September 14. Davis assured *Microwave News* that the Senator's staff is fully engaged in preparing for the hearing, even though no formal announcement has yet been made.

The cell phone industry is largely boycotting the conference. The only industry participant on the latest version of the agenda is Jack Rowley of the **GSM Association**. He is listed as "invited." Rowley is on vacation this week and was unavailable for comment. Davis said that he is still "mulling it over." Motorola's C.K. Chou declined to come because he felt the list of invited speakers is not balanced. The current program does favor the side of the cell phone debate that favors precaution. The only possible source of disagreement among the speakers would likely come from **Om Gandhi** of the University of Utah and Niels Kuster of **IT'IS Foundation** who have been feuding for over a decade over the potential risks to children.

Davis sees the meeting as a first step towards establishing an RF health research program in the U.S. For the last 25 years, the federal government has funded very few studies. To that end, Specter's support is key.

Over the last year, Davis has worked hard to raise the visibility of cell phone health risks. Last July, **Ronald Herberman**, the then director of the **University of Pittsburgh Cancer Institute**, issued a **call for precaution** in the use of cell phones—a move she encouraged (see our **posts of July 23, 25 & 28, 2008**). While the initiative prompted a good amount of press coverage, it was badly received by the cancer establishment, some members of which have been critical of her 2007 book, *The Secret History of the War on Cancer*. Davis no longer has a position at the cancer center. She said she resigned. Davis remains a professor at the University of Pittsburgh School of Public

Health. She said that she would continue to have an appointment at the school through the 2009-2010 academic year. At the same time she has moved her office to Washington.

In September 2008, not long after he issued his appeal, Herberman testified at a Congressional hearing called by Rep. **Denis Kucinich** (D-OH). He said that, looking at government statistics, he had been "struck" by the fact that the incidence of brain cancer has been increasing over the last ten years, particularly among 20-29 year-olds. (See our "**Are Brain Cancer Rates Rising Among Young Adults?**") The peer-reviewed paper with those results will appear soon, Davis said. She and Herberman and **Melissa Bondy** of the M.D. Anderson Cancer Center in Houston are all coauthors of the forthcoming paper. Bondy will also be at the conference.

Kucinich and Rep. **Edward Markey** (D-MA) have been invited to participate at a round-table discussion on September 15 at the close of the conference.

Part of the money for the meeting has come from a grant to the University of Pittsburgh from the National Institute of Environmental Health Sciences (**NIEHS**). Chris Portier, an associate director of the institute, is a member of the conference steering committee. On July 31, the **Competence Initiative for the Protection of Humanity, Environment and Democracy** in Germany issued an "**Appeal to Support the Conference**." It stated, in part, "If the conference in Washington fails for financial reasons, this would mean to miss a great chance that independent research is heard in the political field."

Money seems to be in short enough supply that Davis is planning to ask reporters (*Microwave News* included) to pay the \$100 registration fee she is asking from all attendees except invited speakers. That may hamper press coverage. One long-time Washington journalist was skeptical. "No one from the press will come," he predicted.