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December 17, 1999



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K. Randy Pierce, M.D.  
Gregory L. Hemphill, M.D.  
Mark A. Plunkett, M.D.

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Dockets Management Branch (HFA - 305)  
Food and Drug Administration  
5630 Fishers Lane, Rm 1061  
Rockville, MD 20852

Re: Docker No. 97N-484S

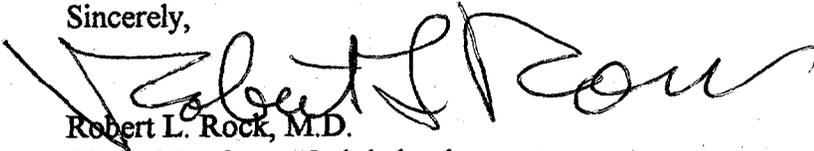
Dear Sir or Madame:

I have been in ophthalmology practice in Austin, Texas since 1963, having been a fellow with Dr. Ramon Castroviejo in New York City in 1962 - 1963. I was dismayed to hear of the current proposal in reference to donor cornea and Creutieldt-Jakob disease, which is guaranteed to be disastrous to our now ample supply of cornea tissue. I have been through almost all phases of keratoplasty donor material, from whole globes, which I harvested myself, often in the middle of the night, which needed to be used very soon, to the present level of cornea-scleral rims with superb preservative solutions.

I have been able to, offer the needy corneal blind patients excellent tissue with a short waiting period. When the Texas Legislature was debating our enviable donor tissue law (it passed, of course) I personally took a van load of my post op patients to the hearings to tell the legislators first hand how vital their restored vision is. If distance and time would permit, I would like to flood your office and the committee room with those same type of patients - your committee needs to hear this, instead of an extremely rare and hypothetical imagined danger which will greatly hamper the efforts of clinicians.

Please apply reason, scientific evidence, and above all compassion for the corneal blind and do not place those onerous conditions.

Sincerely,

  
Robert L. Rock, M.D.  
Clinical Professor Ophthalmology  
UTMB  
Galveston, Texas

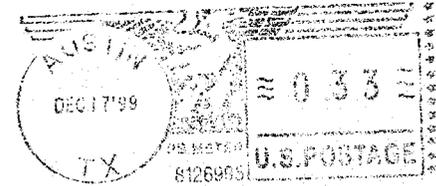
c c : Gary Warner  
Susan Ramsey

97N 484S

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