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United States of America

March 14, 2018

Christopher Turpin  
Acting Senior Vice President for News  
and Editorial Director,  
National Public Radio  
1111 North Capitol Street, NE  
Washington, DC 20002

Sent by email to [cturpin@npr.org](mailto:cturpin@npr.org)  
CC by fax to (202) 513-3329

Dear Mr. Turpin,

I write to you on behalf of The Quinism Foundation with a formal request from our organization. The Quinism Foundation promotes and supports education and research on quinism, the family of medical disorders caused by poisoning by quinoline drugs, including the antimalarial drug mefloquine — a drug which has been widely administered to young women and men of the Peace Corps for over the past quarter century.

**We are requesting that NPR air, in full, and without further delay, the original two-part investigative news report on mefloquine that had been previously scheduled to air last year on NPR, prior to its abrupt cancellation.**

It is our understanding that this two-part report was fully vetted and approved by NPR and had been scheduled to air in November 2017 on consecutive broadcasts of the Sunday and Monday All Things Considered shows.

This two-part report represents a critical development in bringing much-needed national attention to the hidden epidemic of mefloquine poisoning among Returned Peace Corps Volunteers, many of whom have suffered lasting or even permanent neurologic and psychiatric adverse health effects from this drug.

While our organization recognizes the difficult circumstances and concerns that surrounded the initial decision to cancel the airing, it our understanding that these concerns do not in any way extend to the substance of this important investigation. It is also our understanding that NPR remains very proud of the work of NPR Investigations staff on this two-part report and supports the eventual airing of its content.

We also understand that this investigation into mefloquine likely represents a significant investment of NPR donor resources. For example, I was first contacted by staff at NPR expressing interest in a story on mefloquine in April 2012 and was advised that NPR editors had approved work on this investigation as early as October 2012. Over the next five years, I personally invested several dozen hours participating in on-site and telephone interviews, and in email correspondence with NPR Investigations staff. It seems likely that total time invested in this story over the past five years by NPR staff is orders of magnitude greater than this.

Our organization is aware of several Returned Peace Corps Volunteers who contributed a similar commitment of time in support of this investigation, many of whom continue to struggle with the disabling adverse health effects of mefloquine poisoning. We have heard from some who have been deeply disappointed at NPR's abrupt cancellation of the investigation's airing, which has now indefinitely delayed their hopes that their urgent concerns would be advanced.

We recognize that our request will likely conflict with existing NPR editorial policies. For example, the recent departure from NPR of the story's lead investigator would preclude his responding to comments about the broadcast. However, given that this report has been fully vetted and approved by NPR, and given that its content is apparently under consideration for broadcast by other NPR staff, we believe that consideration must be given by the organization to the benefits of waiving any such policy — as can occur in other exceptional situations — to permit the airing of this story, in full, and without further delay. We also believe that NPR must consider the harms of not airing this two-part investigation in a timely manner, including the harms to the many thousands of individuals affected by mefloquine poisoning — particularly the young women and men of the Peace Corps — who will continue to suffer daily from a lack of national attention to this issue.

As time is of the essence in this matter, I thank you in advance for your urgent consideration of this request.

Sincerely,

/electronically signed/

Remington Nevin, MD, MPH, DrPH  
Executive Director, The Quinism Foundation  
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