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*The Next Step in Changing the World*

March 14, 2018

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

Dear Mr. Turpin,

It has recently come to our attention that a National Public Radio (NPR) feature on the effects of the antimalarial mefloquine on volunteers serving in the Peace Corps is no longer scheduled for airing. We understand this is due to the dismissal of the lead reporter for reasons unrelated to the integrity of the story content. As this feature has been several years in the making and has gone through significant editing and vetting, we encourage you to take the necessary steps to ensure this story is aired.

While many Peace Corps Volunteers have used mefloquine and not experienced side effects, we have also heard from many within our community who have complained about the after effects of mefloquine use. In recent years, Peace Corps responded to volunteer concerns by making policy changes to strengthen volunteer choice in selecting an appropriate antimalarial drug for their service. However, legislation currently before the House of Representatives (H.R. 2259) includes mefloquine provisions and indicates further improvements can be made.

It is our hope that providing forums where all parties can share their viewpoints leads to informative decision making and a stronger, better Peace Corps. The volunteers who stepped forward for this interview are an important part of this forum. The individual testimonies of Returned Peace Corps Volunteers (RPCVs) who agreed to be interviewed by NPR represent a small sample of volunteers who, over time, faced moderate to severe health impacts due to mefloquine toxicity.

The decision RPCVs made to share their experiences for a nationally broadcast story was not an easy one. Going public with personal testimonies about one's health care and subsequent challenges requires trust and confidence. Withdrawing the story for reasons not dealing with content may be demoralizing for those whose service we value and who stepped forward expecting their voices (and others like them) be heard.

I understand the resource constraints the news industry is facing, but ask you to commit the resources to air this story.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Glenn Blumhorst".

Glenn Blumhorst  
President and CEO