



**Statement from Andrew W. Zimmerman, MD, Professor of Pediatrics and Neurology, University of Massachusetts Medical School, January 15, 2018**

Some media reports have mischaracterized an affidavit I provided in September 2018 regarding my opinion about the complex interplay of inflammation, mitochondrial disorders and the risk of developmental regression in children with autism, expressed in the context of the US Department of Health and Human Services Omnibus Autism Proceedings in 2007.

As a pediatric neurologist and member of the American Medical Association, the American Academy of Pediatrics, the Child Neurology Society, the American Academy of Neurology and the American Neurological Association, I strongly support the importance of vaccines for all children. I have spoken with many parents of children with ASD over the years who feel strongly that their children developed ASD due to vaccines and I have vigorously defended the importance of vaccines as the best way to prevent many serious diseases.

I have practiced pediatric neurology for 42 years, recently retiring from clinical practice. A primary interest of mine has been autism spectrum disorder, or ASD, for 33 years, especially with respect to its possible causes and treatments. In my research, I have investigated immune aspects of autism, such as neuroinflammation and maternal antibodies. In 2006, I co-authored a case report of a child who developed ASD following immunizations and was found to have a cellular energy (mitochondrial) disorder. Subsequently, other publications by myself, by colleagues and by researchers at other institutions supported the concept that underlying mitochondrial abnormalities in some children may contribute to their development of ASD, especially in those who undergo regression, or loss of skills following normal development.

In 2007, I wrote an affidavit for the US Department of Justice, in which I stated my opinion at that time, based on the 2004 Institute of Medicine (IOM) report, "Immunization Safety Review: Vaccines and Autism," that there was no scientific evidence that vaccines cause autism. I was prepared to testify to that effect at the Omnibus Autism Proceeding (OAP).

Three days before I was scheduled to testify, I spoke with DOJ attorneys about my revised opinion, that there *may be a subset of children* who are at risk for regression if they have underlying *mitochondrial dysfunction* and are simultaneously exposed to factors that stress their mitochondrial reserve (which is critical for the developing brain). Such factors might include infections, as well as metabolic and immune factors, and vaccines.

I was subsequently asked by the DOJ not to testify.

In the years since 2007, I was asked to testify in federal vaccine or civil courts on behalf of several children who had similar histories of developmental regression and ASD following immunizations and were later found to have mitochondrial disorders.

During one of these cases, I learned that my original affidavit, based on the 2004 IOM report, had been used in court without the modification I refer to above – that in my opinion, there *may be a subset of children* who are at risk for regression if they have underlying *mitochondrial dysfunction* and are simultaneously exposed to factors that stress their mitochondrial reserve (which is critical for the developing brain). Such factors might include infections, as well as metabolic and immune factors, and vaccines.

I was asked by Mr. Rolf Hazlehurst and Robert F. Kennedy, Jr. to write a subsequent affidavit (9/7/18) regarding my recall of events in 2007.

I have sought in my research to investigate signs of mitochondrial dysfunction in children with ASD and am currently conducting research into methods of identifying reliable signs of mitochondrial dysfunction in children with ASD.

This is an important question that has been raised in many publications in recent years. My hope for the future is that, through research, we will eventually be able to identify the causes of regression and find the means to identify children early who are at risk and prevent the development of ASD.