



DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH AND HUMAN SERVICES

OFFICE OF INSPECTOR GENERAL

WASHINGTON, DC 20201



July 12, 2019

Michael A. Carome, M.D.
Director
Public Citizen's Health Research Group
1600 20th Street, NW
Washington, DC 20009

Sidney M. Wolfe, M.D.
Founder and Senior Adviser
Public Citizen's Health Research Group
1600 20th Street, NW
Washington, DC 20009

Dear Dr. Carome and Dr. Wolfe:

I am writing in response to your letter dated April 29, 2019, in which you cited a news article alleging that National Institutes of Health (NIH) leadership prohibited two NIH scientists from speaking with Office for Human Research Protections (OHRP) investigators about an NIH-funded clinical trial's potential risk to human research subjects. A subsequent article, published 5 days after your letter, reported that NIH leadership reversed its position and would allow the two scientists to discuss this clinical trial with OHRP. I have provided copies of your letter along with these articles to our components for their awareness.

The Department of Health and Human Services, Office of Inspector General (OIG), takes allegations of retaliation against those who report fraud, waste, and abuse very seriously and encourages employees to come forward with information to protect the public. The Whistleblower Protection Act of 1989, 5 USC 2302(b), protects Federal employees from retaliation for reporting a violation of law, rule or regulation, gross mismanagement, gross waste of funds, abuse of authority, or a substantial and specific danger to public health or safety. For Federal employees, the primary venue for reporting prohibited personnel practices and whistleblower retaliation is the U.S. Office of Special Counsel. Information about whistleblower retaliation protections for Federal employees and the process for filing a complaint with the Office of Special Counsel (OSC), is available at <https://osc.gov/>. OIG would encourage NIH employees to report any instances of retaliation to the OSC.

Sincerely,

Christopher Seagle
Director of External Affairs