

STATEMENT BY

BARBARA DUNN

TO GOVERNMENT REFORM COMMITTEE

HEARING ON ANTHRAX

OCTOBER 3, 2000

Mr. Chairman and members of the House Government Reform Committee:

I am appearing before you to at least try to ensure that no other person or family goes through what my family has been through as a result of the Department of Defense/BioPort Anthrax Program.

As you know, my husband, Richard Dunn, had worked for BioPort and Michigan Biologic Products Institute, since 1992. Dick's job was to care for and monitor test animals at BioPort, and he was required to take the same anthrax vaccine given to our nation's military personnel.

Dick received 11 doses of the vaccine. The last two were given April 2, 2000 and April 13, 2000, both in the left arm. An autopsy performed in August suggests the vaccine as a factor, according to the Ionia County Chief Medical Examiner Dr. Robert Joyce. Dr. Joyce said Dick had an "inflammatory response" to the vaccine throughout his body.

Immediately after the results of the autopsy were performed, BioPort went on television and said they had no idea Dick had ever shown symptoms. BioPort also said the worst reactions they had ever heard of were minor headaches and localized pains.

First of all, let me tell you that my husband, Dick, had more than a headache after his vaccine was given to him in two parts in April. Soon afterward, he started suffering swelling in his left arm, wrist and hand. Dick also had some nausea, joint pain, and his arm was hot to the touch. These symptoms never went away, and they were no different than the other reactions he had every year, except this time they were much worse. I understand that these are the same chronic symptoms our military people have suffered.

On May 11, 2000, the swelling in the left side was much worse; the joint pain was worse, as was his fatigue. My husband seemed much worse than the month before. He went to work on May 13 and called me to say he needed to see a doctor. Dick was put off from work that day. When he would see the BioPort worker's compensation doctor in Lansing, he always stopped to see his friends at BioPort. His company knew of his ongoing symptoms, because they always helped us with paper work and because of the many calls they made to see how Dick was doing. I am very grateful for that. He did think of them as his family. However, when Dick returned to work, he was still swollen and very tired and still suffered joint pain. Nevertheless, he was given a release to return to work with limitations.

Dick died on July 7, 2000, and that has changed my life and the lives of my children forever. This is fact, not fiction. Dick believed in this program, but also wanted it to be a safe program. I know that BioPort has had a lot of legal troubles and that you, the government, have been investigating the company for safety reasons. Only recently did I learn that in late August, BioPort had to recall three products, including the anthrax vaccine, because the wrong expiration date was put on labels. I don't know what lot or batch of vaccine the company gave Dick, but I do know that a lot of other Americans have been made sick by the vaccine, and that is why I am here today. Nothing can be done to bring my husband back, but I ask this committee to please rethink this program and make it a safe one. I hope someday that, if any of you need to take this vaccine, you will have an option of whether or not to take it, and that if your option is to say "no," there will not be any repercussions.

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