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LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

What's going on at HHS?

The March 26 front-page article “Vaccine skeptic to head study on autism,” about David Geier being tapped to lead a Centers for Disease Control and Prevention study on a potential link between autism and vaccines, was alarming. When politics drowns out medical science, all of us suffer. For more than 25 years, I have been involved in autism education and research. Decades of science have proved categorically that vaccines do not cause autism.

The origin of this myth is a 1998 study in the *Lancet* that was later exposed as flawed and retracted by the medical journal. The primary author subsequently lost his medical license over ethical violations.

Informed by decades of research and dozens of studies, leading health organizations, including the CDC, affirm that vaccines are safe and do not cause autism.

A 2019 study by the Vaccine Safety Datalink involving more than 95,000 children, as well as a 2014 review of studies published in *Annals of Internal Medicine* that examined data from more than 1.2 million children worldwide, found no association between the MMR vaccine and autism.

Other vaccines, including the common DTaP (diphtheria, tetanus and pertussis) vaccine, have also been studied for autism risk. Again, none have been linked to the development of autism.

Vaccines are continuously monitored for safety through systems such as the Vaccine Adverse Event Reporting System and Vaccine Safety Datalink to ensure that any potential safety concerns are detected and investigated.

The scientific consensus is clear: Vaccines do not cause autism. When such clarity is clouded by politics, willful ignorance and illogical mistrust of proven facts, the health of all Americans is put at risk.

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