

## **Dentsply given "Wake-up Call" by Community, Faith-based, Environmental & International Groups: Phase Out Manufacturing Mercury Fillings**

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YORK, Pa., May 20, 2013 — /PRNewswire-USNewswire/ -- At the headquarters city for the #2 U.S. amalgam manufacturer, a broad-based coalition of community, faith-based, and environmental groups call on Dentsply International to cease making amalgam. Deceptively marketed as "silver fillings," amalgam is composed 50% of mercury.

At a news conference at the Yorktowne Hotel on 21 May 2013, the speakers unveil a letter from 23 organizations from Pennsylvania, around the nation, and from six continents -- including several religious orders — calling for Dentsply to set a timetable to phase-out mercury amalgam. Signers range from South Central Pennsylvanians for a Mercury-Free Environment to Ursuline Sisters of Tildonk to Consumers for Dental Choice — plus environmental groups from Australia, Bangladesh, France, Ivory Coast, Lebanon, Mauritius, Philippines, Poland, and Uruguay.

The letter expresses concern that Dentsply may dump the product abroad as American consumers increasingly reject amalgam. Amalgam accounts for 10% of global mercury consumption — 313-411 tons of mercury yearly. It enters the environment via cremation, dental office air and water emissions, and human waste.

Dental mercury converts into even more toxic methylmercury, which enters fish, hence the food chain. Mercury exposure is particularly dangerous for developing brains of the unborn, infants and young children.

"We issue a wake-up call for Dentsply," said Mary Lu Hale, chair of South Central Pennsylvanians for a Mercury-Free Environment. "Our communities like Dentsply and want it to make profits from its hundreds of quality dental products. But for the good of its reputation and that of this community, it should phase out making amalgam."

"The faith-based community believes that mercury use in all products must end," said Sister Valerie Heinonen of the Ursuline Sisters of Tildonk. "The place to start is to stop placing a mercury product in children's mouths."

"The world comes to York to ask Dentsply to stop making amalgam," said Charlie Brown of World Alliance for Mercury-Free Dentistry. "The mercury treaty changes the ball game."

"I never use amalgam and never need to," said Dr. Carol Layton, a dentist from Hershey, PA. "Amalgam is a primitive, polluting, pre-Civil War product which cracks teeth."

"Amalgam is a major source of mercury pollution," said Michael Bender of the Mercury Policy Project. "The U.S. government stated position in the negotiations was support for a phase down leading to an eventual amalgam phase out."

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SOURCE Consumers for Dental Choice

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