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To Whom It May Concern:

Investments in the translation of basic research to clinical and practical products that will benefit the public are at an all time high. According to NSF and NIH, it is no longer enough to carry out basic research; we are encouraged to stretch beyond the laboratory and figure out how to use what we've learned to benefit society.

Against this backdrop, the actions taken by the FTC against Dr. Aaron Seitz are especially chilling. When a scientist takes his well-regarded research and puts in even more than the usual long hours to translate that research into something useful for society, we should be lauding him, not penalizing him with fines. The type of skills needed to succeed in this translation are many and not in the scientists' ordinary toolkit. One must also become savvy with financial, legal and marketing issues that bear on offering a product to the public.

This is a tall order, but one that at least some federal agencies would like to see scientists meet. Instead of setting punitive tripwires for scientists acting in the public good, the FTC should provide specific guidance for course correction. The FTC's current actions cut down the very activity NSF and NIH are seeking to build up and are counterproductive for us all.

Sincerely,


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