



Colleen Wegman, President and CEO

1500 Brooks Avenue

P.O. Box 30844

Rochester, NY 14603-0844

March 15, 2020

Dear Ms. Wegman:

I am writing to you both as a loyal Wegmans customer, and as Vice President and General Counsel of the Center for Inquiry (“CFI”).

CFI is an educational nonprofit organization dedicated to the promotion of science, reason, freedom of inquiry, and humanist values. Our vision is a world where evidence, science, and compassion—rather than superstition, pseudoscience, or prejudice—guide public policy.

CFI has always stood foursquare against the promotion of scientifically unfounded alternative medical treatments. Too often these worthless snake oils are represented as being equally valid alternatives to real, science-based medicines. In pursuit of this goal, over recent years CFI has filed suit in D.C. superior court against both CVS and Walmart for those retailers’ marketing of homeopathic products.<sup>12</sup>

Homeopathy is a complete sham. There exists no scientific evidence that homeopathy is any more effective than a placebo in the treatment of any medical condition. Indeed, homeopathy *cannot* be any more effective. It is based on theories that run contrary to the laws of science—that “like cures like,” and that the more diluted a substance is, even to the point that not a single molecule of the original “active” ingredient remains, the more powerful it becomes.

The Federal Trade Commission has noted this complete absence of proof of efficacy. In November 2016, the FTC issued an Enforcement Policy Statement<sup>3</sup> which noted, *inter alia*, that for over the counter homeopathic products, “the case for efficacy is based solely on traditional homeopathic theories and there are no valid studies using current scientific methods showing the product’s efficacy.”

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<sup>1</sup> [https://centerforinquiry.org/press\\_releases/cfi-sues-cvs/](https://centerforinquiry.org/press_releases/cfi-sues-cvs/)

<sup>2</sup> [https://centerforinquiry.org/press\\_releases/walmart-sued-for-fraud-homeopathy/](https://centerforinquiry.org/press_releases/walmart-sued-for-fraud-homeopathy/)

<sup>3</sup> <https://www.ftc.gov/news-events/press-releases/2016/11/ftc-issues-enforcement-policy-statement-regarding-marketing>

The statement went on to explain that in order for marketing claims not to be misleading, the advertisement or label should effectively communicate that “1) there is no scientific evidence that the product works; and 2) the product’s claims are based only on theories of homeopathy from the 1700s that are not accepted by most modern medical experts.”

Scientists and the government agree. Homeopathy is bunk. I was therefore appalled to enter your Charlottesville store on Friday, March 13, and see that not only have you continued to sell homeopathic products, but, unbelievably, you ran a promotion on these products, with many being listed at lower prices than normal. As a result, the shelves were stripped bare of homeopathic products.

As you are well aware, we are currently in the midst of a global viral pandemic. To promote and encourage the use of what can only be described as snake oil in this situation is one of the most irresponsible things I can imagine. People rely on your pharmacy for their health needs. People will, as a result of your profit seeking actions, rely on homeopathic products to treat and prevent COVID 19, and go about their regular activities with a false sense of security that they are protected, and that they cannot pass this virus on to their family, friends and colleagues.

You state in your corporate values that Wegmans “make[s] a difference in every community [it] serve[s].”<sup>4</sup> Through this crassly irresponsible attempt to increase your stores’ profits in a time of health crisis and panic, the difference you will make may well be fatal to some of your customers.

Yours,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'N. Little', with a stylized flourish at the end.

Nicholas J. Little, Esq.  
Vice President and General Counsel, Legal Director.  
Center for Inquiry, Inc.  
1012, 14th St N.W. Ste 205  
Washington, D.C. 20005  
nlittle@centerforinquiry.org

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<sup>4</sup> <https://www.wegmans.com/about-us/company-overview/>