

POSTION: DEPUTY DIRECTOR for THE FDA

NOMINEE: Joshua Sharfstein

Born: 1970

Occupation: Commissioner of Health for the City of Baltimore, Maryland

Education: Harvard College, 1991; Harvard Medical School 1996; Residency in pediatrics at Boston City Hospital and Boston Medical Center; completed a special pediatrics fellowship with Boston University

Work history: Served as health policy advisor to Congressman Henry A. Waxman and Joined the Democratic staff of the House Government Reform Committee where he was responsible for oversight and legislative projects on scientific integrity, HIV/AIDS, FDA oversight, tobacco control, public health preparedness and other health topics. While on the committee he spearheaded unscientific reports attacking both abstinence education and pregnancy care centers. 2005-2008: Commissioner of Health for the City of Baltimore
2008: Leader of Obama's transition team on the FDA

On Abortion

“It is more dangerous for a woman to go through childbirth than to have an abortion.”

“By depriving poor women of such services (access to taxpayer-funded abortionists), *Rust* (case concerning the legality and constitutionality of regulations on the use of funds spent by the U.S. to groups that promote abortion) will increase the shamefully high infant mortality rates in urban and rural areas.” And “will likely raise infant mortality rates among low-income populations.”

“*Rust* will also contribute to infant mortality (rates) by obstructing women's access to abortion services.”

“Denying access to an abortion at a public clinic will force some women to wait even later into pregnancy before they can afford one, thus increasing their health risks.”

Joshua Sharfstein, “Conservatives’ Abortion Wrongs,” *The Harvard Crimson*. June 4, 1991.

[\[Source\]](#)

On Parental Consent

Supported making the HPV vaccine mandatory for girls with no requirement to obtain parent’s approval.

[\[Source\]](#)

On Treating Drug Users

“He is also an advocate of the use of a treatment for heroin addicts called “bupe” on the street, and he set up the Baltimore Buprenorphine Initiative. The Baltimore Sun has written about the program, questioning whether addicts using bupe are better off than those using methadone. The Baltimore health department’s Web site says heroin overdoses have dropped.”

[\[Source\]](#)

On Fighting Medical Companies

“Opting for action over the status quo, a group of Baltimore physicians decided to challenge common perceptions that children's over-the-counter cold and cough medicines are safe and effective. They believe the products are neither. Led by the city's health department, the group brought a citizens' petition to the Food and Drug Administration asking that the agency tell parents that the products never were found to be safe or effective for this young population. The FDA is now considering the matter and, at press time in December 2007, the final decision was still pending. ‘We are working intently to provide a public statement in the near future,’ an agency spokeswoman said.” [\[Source\]](#)

Baltimore’s Rising Teen Pregnancy Rates

“The Maryland Department of Health and Mental Hygiene's Vital Statistics Administration reported that the birthrate among to 15- to 17-year-olds increased by 14-percent since last year (during Mr. Sharfstein’s tenure as Baltimore Health Commissioner). That's about 100 more births than the 649 recorded the year before.” Farrah Childs, “Teen Pregnancy on the Rise in Baltimore,” *WYPR News in Maryland*. August 27, 2008.

[\[Source\]](#)

Reaction from Pro-Abortion Groups

“As New York City Health Commissioner, Dr. Hamburg instituted a needle-exchange program to help prevent the spread of HIV, oversaw abortion counseling and family planning centers and pregnancy prevention programs. Like Dr. Hamburg, Dr. Sharfstein (nominee for Deputy at FDA) demonstrated pro-choice credentials throughout his career” NARAL Pro-Choice New York press release [\[Source\]](#)

Political Opinions

“When I worked on the needle-exchange issue for Congressman Waxman, I would meet with groups who were morally opposed to the needle-exchange program. I would say, “Look, if you want to find the program morally wrong, that’s your prerogative, but you have to look yourself in the mirror and say people are going to die. We had a web site, www.politicsandscience.org, which included an overview of the Bush administration policies toward science, and [it] has specific examples of where [Republican] ideology has affected health policy. It shows how they’ve distorted web sites—misrepresented information about condoms, for example.”

[\[Source\]](#)