

# 2006 UCS and PEER Survey of U.S. FOOD AND DRUG ADMINISTRATION SCIENTISTS

*The Union of Concerned Scientists (UCS) is an independent nonprofit alliance of more than 100,000 concerned citizens and scientists who augment rigorous scientific analysis with innovative thinking and committed citizen advocacy to build a cleaner, healthier environment and a safer world. Public Employees for Environmental Responsibility (PEER) is a national nonprofit alliance of state and federal resource professionals working to promote environmental ethics and accountability. UCS and PEER are surveying all FDA medical officers, consumer safety officers, chemists and other specialists (referenced collectively as “scientists” in this survey).*

*These survey questions were developed with significant input from your colleagues. Please take a few moments to fill out the survey on your personal time and mail it back in the enclosed postage-paid envelope. As with all contact with UCS and PEER, any sensitive information in survey responses will be strictly confidential. UCS and PEER will tabulate the survey results and make them available to you on their websites.*

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## MISSION

1. FDA has sufficient resources to effectively perform its mission of “protecting the public health ... and helping the public get the accurate, science-based information they need to use medicines and foods to improve their health.” [Excerpt from full FDA mission statement]

<i>strongly agree</i>	<i>agree</i>	<i>no opinion</i>	<i>disagree</i>	<i>strongly disagree</i>
5% (46)	20% (199)	5% (51)	41% (404)	29% (282)

2. The Center/Office of the Commissioner/Office of Regulatory Affairs where I work has the resources it needs to meet its role in fulfilling the mission of FDA.

<i>strongly agree</i>	<i>agree</i>	<i>no opinion</i>	<i>disagree</i>	<i>strongly disagree</i>
3% (33)	21% (200)	9% (88)	40% (387)	27% (268)

3. My Center/Office is more effective today than it was five years ago.

<i>strongly agree</i>	<i>agree</i>	<i>no opinion</i>	<i>disagree</i>	<i>strongly disagree</i>
6% (62)	21% (211)	25% (247)	28% (275)	19% (191)

4. FDA is acting effectively to protect public health.

<i>strongly agree</i>	<i>agree</i>	<i>no opinion</i>	<i>disagree</i>	<i>strongly disagree</i>
9% (92)	41% (404)	10% (100)	29% (284)	10% (94)

## MANAGEMENT

5. I respect the integrity and professionalism of FDA leadership.

<i>strongly agree</i>	<i>agree</i>	<i>no opinion</i>	<i>disagree</i>	<i>strongly disagree</i>
9% (86)	35% (346)	13% (125)	29% (281)	15% (146)

6. FDA leadership consistently stands behind scientific staff or managers who put forth scientifically defensible positions that may be politically controversial.

<i>strongly agree</i>	<i>agree</i>	<i>no opinion</i>	<i>disagree</i>	<i>strongly disagree</i>
3% (30)	20% (195)	20% (195)	38% (375)	19% (186)

7. My management chain consistently stands behind staff who put forth scientifically defensible positions that may be politically controversial.

<i>strongly agree</i>	<i>agree</i>	<i>no opinion</i>	<i>disagree</i>	<i>strongly disagree</i>
8% (75)	31% (299)	22% (217)	27% (262)	13% (127)

*Note: Percentages refer to respondents of each question and may not add up to 100 due to rounding error. Respondents who choose "not applicable" are not included in the total number for calculating percentages.*

8. FDA offers opportunity for advancement based on scientific expertise, not just on administrative and supervisory expertise.

<i>strongly agree</i>	<i>agree</i>	<i>no opinion</i>	<i>disagree</i>	<i>strongly disagree</i>
7% (68)	36% (352)	14% (140)	25% (246)	18% (176)

### PROFESSIONALISM

9. I feel free to openly collaborate with my scientific colleagues in academia or other public agencies on issues related to my position with FDA regarding non-confidential information.

<i>strongly agree</i>	<i>agree</i>	<i>no opinion</i>	<i>disagree</i>	<i>strongly disagree</i>
14% (137)	45% (437)	16% (161)	17% (167)	8% (76)

10. I am afforded appropriate time and resources to keep up with advances in my profession.

<i>strongly agree</i>	<i>agree</i>	<i>no opinion</i>	<i>disagree</i>	<i>strongly disagree</i>
5% (53)	31% (308)	11% (105)	35% (340)	18% (177)

11. I am allowed to publish work in peer-reviewed scientific journals regardless of whether it adheres to agency policies and positions.

<i>strongly agree</i>	<i>agree</i>	<i>no opinion</i>	<i>disagree</i>	<i>strongly disagree</i>
3% (27)	18% (176)	52% (503)	18% (174)	10% (95)

### CANDOR

12. Within the agency I can openly express any concerns about public health without fear of retaliation.

<i>strongly agree</i>	<i>agree</i>	<i>no opinion</i>	<i>disagree</i>	<i>strongly disagree</i>
8% (78)	39% (384)	17% (163)	26% (256)	10% (101)

13. Outside the agency I can openly express any concerns about public health without fear of retaliation.

<i>strongly agree</i>	<i>agree</i>	<i>no opinion</i>	<i>disagree</i>	<i>strongly disagree</i>
5% (51)	29% (282)	26% (257)	27% (271)	13% (125)

14. FDA routinely provides complete and accurate information to the public.

<i>strongly agree</i>	<i>agree</i>	<i>no opinion</i>	<i>disagree</i>	<i>strongly disagree</i>
7% (64)	40% (393)	21% (210)	26% (251)	6% (60)

15. I have been asked explicitly by FDA decision makers to provide incomplete, inaccurate or misleading information to the public, regulated industry, media, or elected/senior government officials.

<i>frequently</i>	<i>occasionally</i>	<i>seldom</i>	<i>never</i>	<i>not applicable</i>
1% (7)	6% (60)	10% (96)	67% (660)	17% (163)

16. I feel that FDA decision makers implicitly expect me to provide incomplete, inaccurate or misleading information to the public, regulated community, media, or elected/senior government officials.

<i>frequently</i>	<i>occasionally</i>	<i>seldom</i>	<i>never</i>	<i>not applicable</i>
3% (26)	8% (74)	11% (104)	60% (586)	19% (188)

### DIRECTION

17. FDA is moving in the right direction.

<i>strongly agree</i>	<i>agree</i>	<i>no opinion</i>	<i>disagree</i>	<i>strongly disagree</i>
4% (37)	28% (272)	18% (176)	35% (345)	15% (152)

18. FDA leadership is as committed to product safety as it is to bringing products to the market.

<i>strongly agree</i>	<i>agree</i>	<i>no opinion</i>	<i>disagree</i>	<i>strongly disagree</i>
10% (97)	39% (379)	14% (141)	26% (257)	11% (108)

19. The public would be better served if the independence and authority of FDA post-market product safety systems were strengthened.

<i>strongly agree</i>	<i>agree</i>	<i>no opinion</i>	<i>disagree</i>	<i>strongly disagree</i>
33% (327)	48% (466)	13% (131)	4% (35)	2% (22)

20. The laws and regulations that govern FDA, including the agency's structure, need change for the agency to better serve the public.

<i>strongly agree</i>	<i>agree</i>	<i>no opinion</i>	<i>disagree</i>	<i>strongly disagree</i>
20% (195)	43% (422)	20% (196)	15% (151)	1% (13)

## SCIENCE

21. FDA scientific documents and reports rely upon the best available science.

<i>always</i>	<i>frequently</i>	<i>occasionally</i>	<i>seldom</i>	<i>never</i>
20% (193)	57% (534)	19% (177)	4% (38)	0% (3)

22. FDA determinations and actions are consistent with the scientific findings contained in FDA documents and reports.

<i>always</i>	<i>frequently</i>	<i>occasionally</i>	<i>seldom</i>	<i>never</i>
14% (135)	59% (554)	24% (225)	3% (30)	0% (2)

23. I have been asked, for non-scientific reasons, to inappropriately exclude or alter technical information or my conclusions in a FDA scientific document.

<i>frequently</i>	<i>occasionally</i>	<i>seldom</i>	<i>never</i>	<i>not applicable</i>
1% (10)	6% (59)	8% (76)	67% (642)	18% (178)

## INDEPENDENCE

24. I know of cases where Department of Health and Human Services or FDA political appointees have inappropriately injected themselves into FDA determinations or actions.

<i>many</i>	<i>some</i>	<i>few</i>	<i>none</i>	<i>not applicable</i>
6% (55)	18% (179)	19% (186)	28% (271)	29% (282)

25. I know of cases where political appointees from other federal departments or agencies (for example, OMB, NIH, USDA, DOD, the White House) have inappropriately injected themselves into FDA determinations or actions.

<i>many</i>	<i>some</i>	<i>few</i>	<i>none</i>	<i>not applicable</i>
4% (37)	11% (103)	18% (172)	36% (351)	32% (310)

26. I know of cases where members of Congress have inappropriately injected themselves into FDA determinations or actions.

<i>many</i>	<i>some</i>	<i>few</i>	<i>none</i>	<i>not applicable</i>
4% (40)	14% (132)	21% (201)	33% (324)	28% (276)

27. I know of cases where commercial interests have inappropriately induced or attempted to induce the reversal, withdrawal or modification of FDA determinations or actions.

<i>many</i>	<i>some</i>	<i>few</i>	<i>none</i>	<i>not applicable</i>
8% (77)	17% (168)	22% (216)	32% (308)	21% (205)

28. I know of cases where non-governmental interests (such as advocacy groups) have inappropriately induced or attempted to induce the reversal, withdrawal or modification of FDA determinations or actions.

<i>many</i>	<i>some</i>	<i>few</i>	<i>none</i>	<i>not applicable</i>
4% (34)	13% (123)	22% (209)	37% (360)	25% (245)

29. To what extent does the FDA serve the needs of each of the following? Rate each one 1 through 5, where 1 is low and 5 is high.

Consumers/Public		Patients		Health Care Providers		Industry		Political Appointees	
1 (low)	7% (66)	1	6% (53)	1	6% (50)	1	3% (30)	1	19% (162)
2	13% (127)	2	17% (161)	2	16% (147)	2	7% (68)	2	11% (93)
3	26% (248)	3	29% (267)	3	38% (342)	3	25% (236)	3	18% (150)
4	28% (270)	4	29% (266)	4	29% (260)	4	35% (330)	4	20% (172)
5 (high)	25% (241)	5	19% (177)	5	11% (97)	5	30% (285)	5	32% (269)
Average	3.5	Avg.	3.4	Avg.	3.2	Avg.	3.8	Avg.	3.3

### JOB SATISFACTION

30. I would recommend that scientists consider a career at FDA.

<i>strongly agree</i>	<i>agree</i>	<i>no opinion</i>	<i>disagree</i>	<i>strongly disagree</i>
15% (147)	44% (426)	17% (169)	17% (166)	7% (72)

31. Over the past few years my personal job satisfaction at FDA has:

<i>increased</i>	<i>decreased</i>	<i>stayed the same</i>	<i>no opinion</i>
18% (173)	52% (507)	28% (276)	2% (24)

32. Morale within my Center/Office is:

<i>excellent</i>	<i>good</i>	<i>fair</i>	<i>poor</i>	<i>extremely poor</i>	<i>no opinion</i>
4% (43)	22% (220)	33% (321)	25% (243)	15% (152)	0% (2)

33. After I received this survey, completing and returning it was:

<i>encouraged by management</i>	<i>not discussed by management</i>	<i>discouraged by management</i>
6% (60)	90% (865)	3% (32)

### DEMOGRAPHICS

34. My current position at FDA is:

<i>Management</i>	<i>Non-management</i>
16% (153)	84% (826)

35. My current GS grade level is:

<i>7 or lower</i>	<i>9-12</i>	<i>13-15</i>	<i>SES</i>	<i>Title 42</i>	<i>none</i>
1% (5)	34% (330)	62% (601)	2% (16)	2% (22)	0% (2)

36. My current permanent commissioned corps rank is:

<i>01-03</i>	<i>04-06</i>	<i>07-08</i>	<i>none</i>
1% (9)	4% (23)	0% (1)	95% (579)

37. I have been working at FDA for:

<i>less than 1 year</i>	<i>1-5 years</i>	<i>6-10 years</i>	<i>11-15 years</i>	<i>more than 15 years</i>
2% (18)	32% (316)	19% (185)	14% (139)	33% (325)

### ESSAY

38. The integrity of the scientific work produced by FDA could best be improved by: