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Dr. Thun's position is consistent with those of the National Institutes of Health, Food and Drug Administration, the National Cancer Institute, and the Federal Communications Commission. These agencies consider cell phones safe, though they acknowledge that more research is needed. The 2008–2009 President's Cancer Panel's "Reducing Environmental Cancer Risk" (an annual report of the U.S. Department of Health and Homeland Services, National Institutes of Health, and National Cancer Institute) did acknowledge, however, that epidemiologic studies "have been able to assess only short lag periods [of use] and focused on a small number of cancer types. Thus while considerable research has been conducted on cancer risk due to RF (radio frequency radiation) from cell phones...the available data are neither consistent nor conclusive..." Subsequent studies on the potential dangers of cell phone use have not produced a consensus among scientists in different countries.

Most recently, on May 31, 2011, the World Health Organization's International Agency for Research on Cancer (IARC) classified radiofrequency electromagnetic fields as possibly carcinogenic to humans based on increased risk for glioma associated with wireless phone use. IARC Director Christopher Wild said, "Given the potential consequences...of this classification and findings, it is important that additional research be conducted into the long-term, heavy use of mobile phones. Pending the availability of...information, it is important to take pragmatic measures to reduce exposure, such as hands-free devices or texting."

WHILE I WAS STILL IN WASHINGTON I appeared on CNN with Wolf Blitzer and on Fox News with Shepard Smith. Alan, our children, and I appeared on *The Dr. Oz Show*, during which Dr. Mehmet Oz declared, "I've heard enough to make me rethink my cell phone use and that of my children."

IN DECEMBER 2009, I BEGAN WORKING WITH the San Francisco Department of Environment and the mayor's office on a "Right-to-Know" ordinance that would require posting at point-of-sale (in addition to within user guides) the amount of radiation (Specific Absorption Rate or SAR) a cell phone emits. San Francisco's mayor, Gavin Newsom, however, was not yet fully on board.

One night, my husband, his brother, sister-in-law, and I were having dinner in a San Francisco restaurant when our waitress mentioned that Mayor Newsom was sitting near us. My sister-in-law looked me in the eye, gave me the thumbs-up, and said, "You go, girl!" Timidly I approached the mayor and, after introducing myself, told him I would be testifying at

the cell phone hearing Monday night. The mayor said he knew who I was, and, gripping my hand, assured me, "This is going to be just fine."

When I arrived at the hearing, Debbie Raphael of the San Francisco Department of Environment approached me and asked, "Just what did you say to the mayor at dinner the other night?" Mayor Newsom had endorsed the cell phone legislation, and the committee voted to move it forward! Six months later, despite strong opposition from CTIA, the International Association for the Wireless Telecommunications Industry, the bill passed 10–1. Similar legislation is being considered in other California cities.

I AM NOT OPPOSED TO USING CELL PHONES. But it angers me that the U.S. government and national health agencies do not do a better job of warning people of the potential risks, especially to young children, whose brains absorb more radiation than adults and who, the President's Cancer Panel acknowledges, "have ahead of them a lifetime of RF [radio frequency] and other radiation exposures and, therefore, special caution is prudent."

Other nations have gone much further in alerting the public. The Israeli government, for example, has banned the marketing of cell phones to children and requires manufacturers to display the SAR on every cell phone. And in France, cell phones are not allowed in schools, and every cell phone is required to be sold with a headset.

TRYING TO EFFECT CHANGE ON THIS ISSUE has not been easy. There are great obstacles, such as the love people have for their devices and people's resistance to acknowledging the potential dangers. Many times I've wanted to give up my advocacy out of despair—such as when I see my own niece holding a cell phone against her head. But my fear that, without action, we will face a pandemic of brain cancer within the next 20 years prevents me from keeping silent.

Thankfully, I have the support of my rabbi, Steven Chester, who believes, "Anything that might be detrimental to one's health, but might get buried... becomes a Jewish issue." At his invitation, I addressed our congregation on the subject. Reciting the prayer from *Mishkan T'filah—A Reform Siddur* that had inspired me to take on this challenge brought me back full circle:

*...When, to the last full measure of selfless devotion, we demonstrate our belief in the ultimate triumph of truth and righteousness,*

*Then Your goodness enters our lives and we can begin to change the world.* □