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Vitter Comments on FDA Withdrawal of Approval for Avastin Use for Breast Cancer Treatment

(Washington, D.C.) – U.S. Sen. David Vitter today made the following statement after the FDA announced that it has revoked approval for the use of Avastin to treat metastatic breast cancer: "The fact remains that thousands of women today depend on Avastin as a vital tool in their fight against breast cancer, and the FDA should not have taken that option off the table by rationing access," said Vitter. "Throughout this process, I expressed my deep concerns and objections to restricting access to Avastin, and I hoped that we might persuade the agency to change course by highlighting the stories of specific women whose lives have been extended because of it. Sadly, the FDA has decided to take that option away from them."

Since last year, Vitter has pressured the FDA to be transparent (http://vitter.senate.gov/public/index.cfm?FuseAction=PressRoom.PressReleases&ContentRecord_id=FCE02AA5-D828-381A-6714-2B9AAAE83ECE) in its decision-making regarding Avastin, which has shown benefits for some women battling advanced breast cancer. Last December, he sent a letter (http://vitter.senate.gov/public/index.cfm?FuseAction=PressRoom.PressReleases&ContentRecord_id=F00AF4FB-E918-68E1-C31C-A3227F2D2022) to FDA Commissioner Margaret Hamburg urging the FDA to allow the continued use of Avastin in treating breast cancer, along with a petition signed by more than 9,000 Americans, including many cancer survivors.

He also raised concerns (http://vitter.senate.gov/public/index.cfm?FuseAction=PressRoom.PressReleases&ContentRecord_id=902AC27B-F5A3-3781-E25F-A8D2E60CA40C in July of last year after at least one member of an FDA review panel suggested that cost-effectiveness was a factor in the panel's evaluation of Avastin.

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