

Congress of the United States
House of Representatives
Washington, DC 20515

What Does
'Peer-Reviewed for Scientific Publication'
Mean and How Does the Process Work?

Tuesday, March 20, 2007, from 9:30-11:30 AM
Room SC-4 of the Capitol Building.

Dear Colleague:

We are writing to call your attention to an invitation you should already have received for this briefing on the scientific process of peer review.

Members and staff of Congress are exposed to a wide variety of claims and counterclaims about many scientific questions and often find it difficult to determine which are widely accepted by the scientific community and which are not. This is a worrisome situation, especially when it comes to matters in which a great deal is at stake, such as protecting the global environment or the public's health. In these areas, and in many others before the Congress, the health and lives of large numbers of people may be at risk for significant periods of time, and it is critically important that policy-makers be informed by the best and the most current science. But how can they tell what that is?

The process of peer review serves to provide expert critical evaluation before scientific findings are accepted for publication, both for journals and for many books. While the process has its limitations, it offers the best means the scientific community has for ensuring quality control.

This briefing will feature two of the country's leading experts on the subject - Dr. Donald Kennedy, Editor-in-Chief of *Science*, the nation's premier general science journal; and Dr. Jeffrey M. Drazen, Editor-in-Chief of *The New England Journal of Medicine*, the foremost medical journal in the U.S. The program, followed by discussion, will include:

Welcome and Introductions - Eric Chivian M.D., Director, Center for Health and the Global Environment, Harvard Medical School; Co-Founder, International Physicians for the Prevention of Nuclear War, winner of the 1985 Nobel Peace Prize

Peer Review for Science Journals - Donald Kennedy Ph.D., Editor-in-Chief, *Science*; Bing Professor of Environmental Science and President emeritus, Stanford University; former Commissioner, Food and Drug Administration

Peer Review for Medical Journals - Jeffrey M. Drazen M.D., Editor-in-Chief, *The New England Journal of Medicine*; Distinguished Parker B. Francis Professor of Medicine, Harvard Medical School; Professor of Environmental Health, Harvard School of Public Health

No RSVP is required for the briefing. For further information, please contact Margaret Thomsen at the Center for Health and the Global Environment at 617-384-8533 or Margaret_thomsen@hms.harvard.edu.

Sincerely,

Bart Gordon
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Rush Holt
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