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Memos bare FDA split over Accutane

Just nine months after the FDA congratulated itself for making the United States the first country to approve Accutane, in 1982, researchers and regulators began year of infighting, name-calling and second-guessing.

“There is no alternative to immediate withdrawal of Accutane from the market,” Dr David Graham, section chief of the FDA’s epidemiology branch, wrote in a 1990 memo.

A number of medical groups, as well as the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention in Atlanta, called for removing Accutane from the market.

Questions also were raised about the FDA’s Dermatologic Drugs Advisory Committee, which

met 23 times between 1982 and 1991 to discuss Accutane