

Health Freedom Rally Coincides with Health Fraud Conference

CONFEDERATION OF STATE HEALTH FREEDOM CAMPAIGNS MEETS HEAD-ON WITH THE FEDERATION OF STATE MEDICAL BOARDS

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This report is from Nicholas Chamberlain, DC, a staff doctor in Dallas, Texas: "It is plain from this itinerary (of the fraud conference) that alternative medicine might end up being defined as synonymous with health fraud.

DALLAS, Texas -- The AMA was convicted of conspiracy and restraint of trade! Old news, right? Maybe, but if you've been keeping up-to-date with some of the articles recently in Dynamic Chiropractic, then you will have noticed Don Petersen's Report of My Findings in the June 16th issue that outlined the aims of the Federation of State Medical Board's Panel on Health Fraud (re: quackery). If you didn't read it, I recommend you go back and do so.

The Federation came to Dallas (June 26-27) in the form of a conference on preventing health fraud. The conference, hosted by the Federal Trade Commission (FTC), was attended by the National Association of Attorneys General (NAAG), and the Federation of State Medical Boards (FSMB). Their purpose was outlined in their two-day itinerary:

- Fraudulent Marketing Practices That Must Be Addressed
- Expanding Coordination to Combat Fraud and Deception
- Alternative/Complementary Therapies
- Impact of States' Alternative Medical Practice Laws on Health Care
- Cross-Border Issues
- Looking Beyond Traditional Law EnforcementM.

It is plain from this itinerary that alternative medicine might end up being defined as synonymous with health fraud. This thought should concern our profession since we are the number one providers of alternative health care in America.

Some of this may appear to be innocent enough on the surface, but when combined with other documents and facts, a different picture emerges. The Special Committee on Health Care Fraud, reporting to the FSMB, cited 11 recommendations for the evaluation, regulation, and prosecution of physicians utilizing questionable health care practices. They also recommended that the FSMB use reliable information in such an evaluation. To facilitate this they recommended FSMB members read such books as *The Health Robbers*, edited by Stephen Barrett, MD. Dr. Barrett is a long-time detractor of chiropractic, and his anti-chiropractic comments are often quoted by the media.

We should question the wisdom of the FSMB in using material published under Dr. Stephen

Barrett's name to educate anyone about alternative medicine, let alone policymakers and government regulators. Dr. Barrett gave evidence against our profession in front of the New Zealand Commission on Chiropractic back in 1979. The opinion of the Commission on Dr. Barrett was that material published by him was "clearly propaganda," and that "other materials were unreliable on matters of fact" (emphasis added). They also noted that: "Nothing he has written on chiropractic ... can be relied on as balanced." The direction that the fraud conference could take was obvious, once you realize that Dr. Barrett was one of the key speakers.

To prevent a biased and one-sided presentation on alternative medicine, it was imperative to bring together people with a broad understanding of the issues involved, and make this knowledge available to the members of the health fraud conference.

Getting the Message Out

Attorney Mike Evers of Dallas, Texas stepped to the front and spearheaded the organization of the Confederation of State Health Freedom Campaigns. Designed to coincide with the Health Fraud Conference, the Confederation gathered together state and national health freedom organizations, drawing media attention to the issue of whether or not a patient should have the right to make their own health care choices, or whether those choices should be legislated for you by the government. The Confederation's three-day program began on the Wednesday night before the fraud conference with a huge "health freedom rally." The rally drew a packed house of more than 600 people, including more than 20 representatives from state health freedom groups, and many members from Parker College of Chiropractic, including its immediate past president, Dr. Jim Parker.

Dr. Andrew Weil, MD, who was recently featured on the cover of Time magazine, sent his greetings via a special video message that urged regulators not to make the mistake of classifying alternative medicine as health fraud.

Barry Sears, PhD, author of *The Zone*, also taped a message predicting that nutritional approaches to treating disease are the future of medicine.

Lendon Smith, MD, whose medical license was revoked for using dietary supplements in his practice, spoke with grace and humor to the audience.

Richard Jaffe, the attorney who headed Dr. Burzynski's legal team, drew roars of laughter when he reminded the audience that it's okay to drive to Michigan and let Dr. Kevorkian assist you in committing suicide, but not to travel to Texas to have Dr. Burzynski help you survive cancer. Dr. Stanislaw Burzynski is the Houston cancer researcher who was recently acquitted on charges that he violated the Food and Drug Act by providing unapproved therapies to his patients.

The hit of the evening was Rachel Stout, 11, whose case drew international attention when her parents were charged with child endangerment after they removed her from Children's Hospital in Dallas so they could consult with Canadian doctors concerning alternative therapies for Rachel's diseased colon.

On Thursday, the second day of the Confederation's agenda included Jane Orient, MD, executive director of the American Association of Physicians and Surgeons (AAPS). Dr. Orient's group successfully sued Hillary Clinton's Health Care Task Force and forced the administration to open its meetings to public scrutiny. She spoke for over an hour on atrocities committed by government officials in the name of combating "health fraud," a term she feels is too loosely defined to give physicians a framework within which to practice.

Later that evening, a reception was held for the Health Fraud attendees, and more than 40 showed

up to see what the Confederation was all about. All the FTC officials from Washington were there, along with several representatives from attorneys general offices and even a few medical board officials. The four spokespersons for alternative medicine invited to address the FTC/NAAG/FSMB conference were there too: Drs. Marc Marcozzi, Adrienne Fugh-Berman, Woodson Merrell, and Alan Trachtenberg. Even Stephen Barrett, the infamous quackbuster, dropped by to pay his respects. The reception invitation was arranged through FTC regional director Tom Carter, who also provided his 110 attendees copies of the Health Freedom Manual notebook. This notebook was produced by the Confederation, and contained nearly 200 pages of articles and other materials supportive of alternative medicine, and the rights of people to choose among various forms of health care.

Friday, the Confederation's third day, was hosted largely by Parker College of Chiropractic. Parker College made available one of their large lecture halls for the Confederation's meetings, and then provided a tour of the expansive campus. Several medical doctors in the group were quite impressed with Parker's level of commitment to providing its 200 students a quality education. Parker followed the tour with a banquet lunch. The delegates included a former U.S. Congressman, the associate dean of Bastyr University, three medical doctors, a dentist, several Washington lobbyists and many others. The luncheon was followed by an awards ceremony in which Mike Evers, the attorney spearheading the Confederation, was officially recognized for his work.

The three days was a huge success and sent a powerful message for health freedom throughout Texas and the United States. The Confederation and all those responsible for its success are to be congratulated for their initiative, and for their efforts to ensure the right of a patient to determine their own health care.

Many groups need to be thanked for their support, but within the chiropractic profession special thanks need to be extended to the Texas Chiropractic Association and Parker College of Chiropractic. I strongly urge you to support similar constructive efforts in your area, or to initiate them yourself. If you would like further information on the Confederation's Health Freedom Rally and the two days of meetings, please call (888) 858-5484.

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AUGUST 1997