

NCAHF

THE BULLETIN BOARD

JULY / AUGUST, 1991

[*The Bulletin Board* is sent to NCAHF members only. It is intended to stimulate and aid in activism against health fraud, misinformation and quackery at the local, state and national levels.]

QUESTIONABLE ADDICTION TREATMENTS TASK FORCE

Addiction treatment is an area remarkable for the discrepancy between scientific information and application in the health marketplace. An NCAHF task force under the direction of William London, EdD, who studies and teaches in the field, is in the process of organizing. Members interested in task force participation should send a resume to Dr. London at P.O. Box 3946, Akron, OH 44314-3946; 216/672-7977.

TASK FORCE ON UNSOUND WEIGHT LOSS

A task force on unsound weight loss schemes has been formed that will pick up where the ad hoc study group left off that issued the NCAHF Guidelines for Evaluating Commercial Weight Loss Promotions in 1987. The new task force is coordinated by Frances M. Berg, MS, LN, editor and publisher of the journal *Obesity & Health*. Members who would like to participate in the task force should send a resume to Ms. Berg at 402 South 14th Street, Hettinger, ND 58639; 701/567-2646.

NCAHF TRIMS NEWSLETTER TO SAVE

NCAHF's growing deficit, which was over \$11,000 for the year thus far at the end of May, has caused us to cut back wherever we can. NCAHF will save more than \$2,000 per year in printing costs by going back to a 4-page newsletter format on at least four of the six annual newsletter issues. The loss of editorial space will be compensated by eliminating the page which lists officers, task force groups, chapters & divisions, and affiliates in 4-page issues. We will also cut back on the number of extra copies printed for distribution. Extra copies of 6-page issues will be printed for promotional purposes.

FDA AND THE NEW LABELING LAW

JAMA, (5/8/91, p.2315) has brief articles by FDA's Stuart Nightingale, MD, explaining three important features of the Nutrition Labeling and Education Act of 1990. FDA is calling for scientific data it can use in determining whether health claims on 10 nutrient relationships are appropriate on food labels: calcium & osteoporosis; sodium & hypertension; lipids & cancer; dietary fiber & cancer; dietary fiber & heart disease; folic acid & neural tube defects; antioxidant vitamins & cancer; zinc & immune function in elderly; and omega-3 fatty acids & heart disease. Address: Office of Health Affairs, FDA, Parklawn Bldg, 5600 Fishers Lane, Rockville, MD 0857.

SUMMER SCHEDULE

William Jarvis will be in Canada during July & August. He may be reached on a limited basis (604/837-2593). NCAHF vice president Jim Lowell, PhD (602/628-9413), and NCAHF Resource Center Director John Renner, MD (800/821-6671), will be available for consultation. A staff person will be available in the main office to process inquiries regarding membership, address changes, reprint requests, and so forth.

PHARMACISTS CAN GET CE CREDIT FOR STUDYING ABOUT QUACKERY

Merlin V. Nelson, PharmD, president of NCAHF's Michigan chapter, has authored a continuing education course approved for 1.0 contact hours of continuing education credit by the ACPE through the Michigan Pharmacists Association. Dr. Nelson's course "Health fraud, Quackery and Misinformation" was published in the December, 1990 *Journal Michigan Pharmacist*, pages 424-429. Its goal is to increase awareness of these problems. Learning objectives include defining health fraud, quackery and misinformation, listing reasons why patients may appear to improve from a useless practice, listing 5 types of harm these cause, and describing problems with the clinical use of acupuncture, Cancell, chiropractic, colonic therapy, holistic medicine, homeopathy, new age healing, and vibrational medicine. Pharmacists who wish to obtain credit answer 10 self-assessment questions, fill out a 5-item evaluation form and send in a coupon with a \$5 member or \$10 nonmember fee. NCAHF encourages other members to prepare such continuing education courses for their professional colleagues where such opportunities exist.

MEDICAL SOCIETIES ENCOURAGED TO DEVELOP STATE HEALTH FRAUD ADVISORY COUNCILS

NCAHF members and others in New York have demonstrated the usefulness of forming health fraud advisory councils within the states to work with government in strengthening consumer protection. The Medical Society of the State of New York recently passed a resolution to introduce before the American Medical Association a resolution in support of the development of Health Fraud Advisory Councils in other states. A copy of the resolution is available from NCAHF; send SSAE.

THE NEXT NCAHF BOARD OF DIRECTORS MEETING IS SCHEDULED FOR SUNDAY, SEPTEMBER 15, 1991 AT THE SEA POINT HOTEL IN SAN DIEGO.

TOLL-FREE PHONE LINE FOR OTC DRUGS?

Joe Kolter (D-Pa) introduced a bill, HR 509, on January 11, 1991, which would amend the Federal Food, Drug & Cosmetic Act to require food and drug manufacturers to have "a toll-free telephone line for inquiries respecting foods containing vitamins or minerals, herbal foods, foods for special dietary use and over-the-counter drugs..." Labels and advertising of such products would be required to reference the number. NCAHF has taken no position on this type of legislation as yet. Members who wish to support the idea should contact their Congressmen.

MICHAEL LANDON'S CANCER REMEDIES

Not surprising, NCAHF has had a number of media inquiries regarding Michael Landon's cancer therapies. It is always a sensitive matter when a celebrity's disease becomes the focus of sensationalist journalism. Landon apparently is trying lots of different things, but mainly he is sticking with legitimate experimental therapies. NCAHF's message to the press has been that Mr. Landon is free to use anything that he wishes, but that if he (and they) wishes to be socially responsible he (and they) will not publicize the questionable remedies which he tries on a speculative basis. Such merely gives quack clinics undeserved publicity that is likely to lead other patients to give a try. After all, they reason, if a bright, successful well-to-do person like Landon who has access to the very best of cancer care has decided to give something a try, it must be worth something. We advise reporters that if the speculative remedy does some real good, of course, it deserves recognition, but not every remedy that he merely tries for a while. We can all appreciate his desperation, but the public has a right to expect role models and the media to behave responsibly. Reporters seem to accept this point of view.

DETROIT BROADCAST MEDIA ABUSE

The February, 1991, *Great Lakes Skeptic* reports on "Dr." Steven Nugent, a nutripathic practitioner* of orthomolecular therapy, hosts a WPON radio program called *New Beginnings*. Nugent admittedly is not a medical doctor, but refers to his clients as "patients," and evidently dispenses nutritional supplements from his place of business which he calls the New Horizons Clinic. The article describes Nugent's bizarre claims, refutations by others and his retorts. It also provides the name and address of the station manager, tells readers how to respond, and how to direct their letters to end up in the station's Public File for review by the FCC at license renewal time. (*see "Can Nutripathy transform the world?" *Nutrition Forum*, September, 1987)

Note: NCAHF sadly recalls that it was broadcasts by a bizarre Detroit MD on the public school system's radio station that led 17-year-old Hodgkins disease sufferer Sonja Boden to abandon life-saving chemotherapy in favor of acupuncture, imagery, Macrobiotic Diet and other nonsense that resulted in her probably needless death in 1988.

Please send items of possible interest to NCAHF members for *The Bulletin Board* or for readers of the *NCAHF Newsletter* to NCAHF, P.O. Box 1276, Loma Linda, CA 92354; FAX 714-824-4838. Provide clear copies suitable for photocopying, and include complete references for citation purposes.

YOU CAN HELP PROMOTE NCAHF

Masters for photocopying the message below are available free upon request. This flyer is a two-sided, single sheet of 8 1/2 X 11 paper, has the appeal shown below on the front and a message about the nature and extent of the problems of health fraud, misinformation and quackery on the back side. It usually is done on light colored paper. These inexpensive flyers help get NCAHF's message out at minimal cost. These make a good companion handout to be placed along side of the ARM list at places where health & legal professionals, educators, regulators, and concerned consumers gather.

WANT TO DO SOMETHING ABOUT QUACKERY?



JOIN US ... WE'RE DOING IT BUT WE NEED YOUR HELP!

The National Council Against Health Fraud, Inc. is a private, voluntary health agency that combats health misinformation, fraud and quackery. NCAHF unites professionals from the health sciences, law and academia with consumers in promoting safe and effective health products and rational, responsible health care.

NCAHF IS INDEPENDENT... SUPPORTED BY MEMBERSHIP DUES
YOUR HELP IS NEEDED NOW!

SEND FOR MORE INFORMATION

(Your stamped, self-addressed, business-size envelope will help)

NCAHF
P.O. BOX 1276
LOMA LINDA, CA 92354

Telephone:
(714) 824-4690

YOUR
NAME _____

ADDRESS _____

CITY _____ STATE _____ ZIP _____

- ☐ Please send a free copy of a recent NCAHF NEWSLETTER and information on how to join NCAHF.
- ☐ Enclosed is a tax-deductible contribution.

DISTRIBUTING THE NCAHF ARM LIST

The *NCAHF Available Resources Materials, Sixth Edition* list could not be mailed with the newsletter due to new postal regulations. Copies will be sent to members at renewal, others upon request. The ARM list has 550+ titles, with references, in more than 45 topic areas. Members may order quantities of these useful brochures for distribution at professional & consumer meetings. This is an excellent way to introduce people to NCAHF. Copies are free to member organizations. We ask only that they not be wasted