

NCAHF  
**THE BULLETIN BOARD**

NOVEMBER / DECEMBER, 1993

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

#### REACTIONS TO INJUNCTION AGAINST *CANCEL*

The *FDA Midwest Health Fraud Alert* (April, 1993) reports that following the permanent injunction against *CanCell*, FDA's Detroit office received over 100 phone calls and 300 letters from across the country from angry, frightened people with life-threatening illnesses who could no longer get *CanCell*. A lobbying group, "The Vibrational Research Foundation" which was affiliated with the Church of the Brotherhood of the Light, began contacting Congress, FDA and the media in an effort to reverse the court's injunction. The alert emphasizes the necessity for even-handedness in regulating health claims.

**Psychosocial Implications.** It is a curious thing how *quackophiliacs* (lovers of quackery) lobby for the legalization of questionable products such as *CanCell*, while wanting the FDA to protect consumers from mainstream drugs. They regularly cite the birth defects caused by thalidomide, which was not approved by the FDA to prevent miscarriage (the cases involving Americans occurred with women who obtained the drug outside of the USA), but want to prevent the agency from regulating high doses of vitamin A which also cause birth defects. Organic food loving quackophiles want protection from minute pesticide residues but fight efforts to bring basic safety standards to herbal products that contain toxins--some of which are natural pesticides found in plants. It is interesting that public opinion, the media and the courts, often take a sympathetic view of "alternative" promoters as underdogs, and the big drug companies as scoundrels, when in reality the laws that are used to prosecute quacks are the same ones that keep the drug and device companies from abusing their marketplace. We shudder to think what the health marketplace would be like without the Food, Drug & Cosmetic Act.

#### THE INFLUENCE OF "SEE B.S." TV'S *60 MINUTES*

The U.S. Public Health Service's report *Dental Amalgam: A Scientific Review and Recommended Public Health Service Strategy for Research, Education and Regulation* cites a 1991 survey done by the American Dental Association following the broadcast of "Is there poison in your mouth?" by *60 Minutes* (December, 1990). It found that 20% of those responding had considered having, or had, their amalgams removed because of concern over their potential health risk.

[Note: The survey was published in the *ADA News* (April 8, 1991). NCAHF tried to obtain a copy of the complete study and its methodology but our request was denied. The published report revealed that 1,083 adults were interviewed by telephone by KRC/Communications Research. 26% of the respondents named television as their primary source of information. In addition to questions about amalgam, concerns over HIV exposure through dentistry and fluoridation were also explored.]

#### QUACKERY AS A PUBLIC HEALTH PROBLEM

NCAHF president William Jarvis argues that quackery should be regarded as a public health problem, rather than a problem belonging to medicine. Jarvis reviews the history and principles of consumer protection law, including setbacks represented by the 1976 Proxmire Amendment and current efforts by Sen. Hatch to do even more damage to the basic standards of labeling, advertising, safety, efficacy, burden of proof and accountability of consumer protection in an article with that title in the Summer-Fall *Florida Journal of Public Health* (1993;5:17-19).

Please send items of possible interest to members for *The Bulletin Board*, or for readers of the *NCAHF Newsletter* to NCAHF, P.O. Box 1276, Loma Linda, CA 92354; fax 909-824-4838. Provide clear (not fax) copies suitable for photocopying, and complete references for citation purposes.

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*Happy Holidays*

## NATIONAL CONSUMERS WEEK FOCUS ON FRAUD

National Consumers Week was October 24-30. One of the useful items distributed by the U.S. Office of Consumer Affairs for the week was its *Focus on Fraud Fact Sheet*. The 18-page document covered consumer fraud, health fraud, credit fraud, telemarketing & direct marketing fraud (aka, mail order), investment fraud, home-related fraud, insurance fraud and car-related fraud. CHIRI's 800-821-6671 hotline was listed as the source for checking out suspicious claims. Dollar estimates for each of the categories was included. The estimate for health fraud given was \$50-80 billion citing *Modern Healthcare* (3/9/92). This is curious, since the 1984 Pepper report estimated quackery at from \$10-25 billion, and the 1992 GAO report estimated health insurance fraud to be \$70+ billion. It makes one wonder if these government agencies read (or believe) other government reports. Most useful are the descriptions of various types of consumer frauds, and some of the places listed where people may turn for information. If readers want NCAHF to supply a copy, please send \$4 to cover costs. A free copy can probably be obtained from the USOCA, 1620 L Street, NW, Washington, DC 20036-5605.

## DALLAS HEALTH GURU EXPOSED

Cliff Sheats, a self-proclaimed nutrition "expert" located in Dallas, Texas, is author of a best seller, *Lean Bodies: The revolutionary New Approach to Losing Bodyfat by Increasing Calories*. Investigations by the *Dallas Morning News* and NCAHF's Dallas-Ft. Worth Affiliate, disclosed that Sheats is a graduate of Clayton University in Missouri, an unaccredited diploma mill. A feature article (6/19/93) in the newspaper exposes not only Sheats but the workings of Clayton University (which no longer sells diplomas within the USA, but only to overseas "students.")

## LONDON TO SERVE AS PRO TEM V-P

Because NCAHF vice president Carla Bouchard, RD has relocated in Sacramento, William London, EdD, who is on sabbatical and working on a Masters of Public Health degree at Loma Linda University, will serve as vice president. This action was voted by the Board of Directors with the consent of Ms. Bouchard at its October 31 meeting.

## BOARD VOTES FUNDS FOR LAWSUIT

The NCAHF board voted funds to initiate a lawsuit against James P. Carter, MD, DrPH for writing, Hampton Roads Publishing Company (Norfolk, VA) for publishing, defamatory lies about the Council in a book titled *Racketeering in Medicine: The Suppression of Alternatives*. Joining in the lawsuit are Stephen Barrett, MD, Victor Herbert, MD, JD, the Consumer Health Information Research Institute and the American Council on Science and Health. Carter repeats lies began by P.J. Lisa's *The Great Medical Monopoly Wars* despite having been told in writing that these were lies, and that others had already paid out-of-court settlements for repeating such lies. Despite successful actions against others, lying about NCAHF persists. We assume that the pseudomedicine industry is willing to spend money to discredit NCAHF (it's the old adage about a lie being repeated often enough that it soon displaces the truth). Because of this, substantial penalties are being sought.

## CANCER MISINFORMATION SOURCES INCLUDED IN NYC CONSUMER GUIDE

In an otherwise useful release in connection with National Breast Cancer Awareness Month, the New York City Department of Consumer Affairs' publication *A Consumer Guide to Breast Cancer Awareness and Resources* (October, 1993) includes three promoters of cancer misinformation under "Educational Resources" (Center for Medical Consumers [advocates of "alternative" medicine and quackery's version of "freedom of choice"], People Against Cancer [Frank Wiewel & Ralph Moss], World Research Foundation [see *NCAHF Newsletter*, May-June, 1991]) and one dubious publication under "Books" (Moss R. *Cancer Therapy: The Independent Consumer's Guide to Non-Toxic Treatment & Prevention* [Equinox, 1992]). In our view, it's a sad day when a major consumer affairs department includes cancer quackery among its resources. It may be that it is getting harder for agencies to tell the difference when people such as Moss and Wiewel are connected with the NIH's Office of Alternative Medicine.

**NEW RECOMMENDED ANTIQUACKERY PUBLICATIONS LIST AVAILABLE; WRITE NCAHF BOOK SALES.**

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*Seasons Greetings*