

THE NCAHF BULLETIN BOARD

JANUARY / FEBRUARY, 1995

The NCAHF 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.

NATUROPATHIC POSITION ON IMMUNIZATION

A resolution on childhood immunizations for adoption by the American Association of Naturopathic Physicians (AANP) is cause for concern to public health and preventive medicine professionals. The resolution makes no mention of the benefits of childhood immunizations, but states that they "have been associated with significant morbidity and mortality and are not universally effective." The emphasis is upon informing parents and guardians of the "benefits and risks" and respecting their "freedom of choice." The resolution's wording sends a decidedly negative message on immunization and panders to the anti-immunization mentality traditional to naturopathy. Naturopathy's policy contradicts its lip-service to preventive medicine and is an obstacle to the acceptance of naturopathic medicine. (*J. Naturopathic Med.* 1994;5:(1):5).

SKEPTIC ISSUE ON 'ALTERNATIVE' HEALTH CARE

Skeptic (vol.3, No.1) features an exceptionally well-written and informative article on Therapeutic Touch (TT) by Linda Rosa, RN*, the NCAHF position paper on homeopathy, and an insightful overview of the "surprising variety of spiritual belief systems" that are being passed off as "alternatives" to science-based health care by Jack Raso. Regular contributor James Randi (The Amazing) roasts NBC-TV for broadcasting *Cured!* with Olympia Dukakis under the title "Prime Time Quackery." *Skeptic* is the quarterly publication of The Skeptics Society. It is a splendid source of information on extraordinary claims, revolutionary ideas, science and critical thinking. Subscription & membership costs \$35 a year; single issues 5.95-well worth the price. Address: 2761 N. Marengo Ave, Altadena, CA 91001.

Rosa traces the history of how TT managed to intrude itself upon the nursing profession, the Rocky Mountain Skeptics' David and Goliath struggle with the State Board of Nursing and the U. of Colorado to have TT scrutinized, and the alarming state of affairs in political nursing. Every RN who cares about her/his profession should read this compelling article.

1994 NCAHF BULLETIN BOARD INDEX AVAILABLE

To obtain a 1994 *NCAHF Bulletin Board* index send a stamped, self-addressed, business-sized envelope to the Loma Linda office.

FDA COMMISSIONER UNDER ATTACK

A disturbing amount of criticism is being aimed at Dr. David Kessler. NCAHF sees Kessler as the best FDA Commissioner in recent memory. Consumer protection has regained some meaning under Kessler's watch. A *Wall Street Journal* article (12/8/94), and another in *National Review* (11/21/94) demonized Kessler and the FDA for impeding business. Buccaneer entrepreneurs may love to hate Kessler, but American consumers should be thankful that a person of his skill and integrity is willing to run the agency that is consumer protection's most formidable line of defense. We urge people to write and speak in his support whenever possible. *60 Minutes'* coverage of Kessler seemed very positive to us. Hopefully this will help him survive his critics.

NIH OAM SHOWED ITS TRUE COLORS

The resignation of Dr. Joseph Jacobs from the NIH OAM has caused science writers to zero in on the true nature of the agency. The titles of articles on the matter tell the story: "The politics of alternative medicine," *Science*, 9/30/94; "Jacobs: politics sets faulty agenda in alternative medicine," *The Cancer Letter* 10/14/94; "First OAM council meeting highlights acrimony," *U.S. Medicine*, 10/94; "Can alternative medicine find a cure for politics?" *Insight* 12/19/94; "Will a cup of cow's whey keep the doctor away?" *Business Week*. 12/12/94.

HENRY HEIMLICH: MEDICAL MESSIAH OR MADMAN?

Henry Heimlich is best known for the anti-choking maneuver that bears his name, however, Heimlich also has been credited with several innovative medical procedures. Now he is pushing another innovative idea: give AIDS patients malaria as a way to mobilize their biological defenses and cure their disease. *Los Angeles Times* reporter Pamela Warrick described a meeting of Hollywood celebrities in the Spring of 1993 at which Heimlich stated that he intended to end the AIDS scourge by 1994. Warrick's 10/30/94 article describes how Heimlich's audacious personality has caused conflict with his peers in the past. He wants to move boldly and they want to observe the age-old ethical principle *Primum non nocere* "above all, do no harm." Heimlich revels in the fact that he has been proved right in the past, and wants people to presume that he will always be right in the future. Heimlich's impatience is shared by patients who do not have time to wait for the slow-pace of responsible research. Heimlich is philosophically opposed to using animals in research preferring human "guinea pigs." Warrick recounts Heimlich's malaria cure for Lyme disease that is administered in Mexico (where he doesn't have to observe inconvenient patient protection standards). Two patients experienced temporary remission only to see their diseases return. One strongly advises against using Heimlich's remedy and complains that he cites her case as a success, but she is not cured and has told him to stop misrepresenting that she is. Heimlich boasted of another cured case but refuses to identify the patient citing doctor-patient confidentiality. A group of scientists and physicians have petitioned U.S. regulatory agencies (FDA, FBI, NIH, IRS) to investigate Heimlich's activities. Heimlich construes this as trying to gain fame by attacking a famous person in the same way an assassin gains fame by killing a celebrity. The Heimlich saga contains all of the issues to be found in the classical conflict between patient protection standards observed by responsible science (and punished by malpractice attorneys when violated), and impatient innovators who want to move full speed ahead. Heimlich appears to be more a crank than a charlatan, but all quacks claim to be Galileos ahead of their times. The old saying "they laughed at Fulton" (the steamboat inventor) must be balanced by the fact that they also laughed at Bozo the Clown, and there have been many more Bozos than Fultons. To hone their skills on dealing with the emotional issues, we recommend that all quackbusters read Warrick's well-written article.

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The complete NCAHF Directory is published in the Jan-Feb issue only. Please notify the main office of revisions. Corrections will be announced in subsequent issues.