

A Hazard to Our Health

As a young woman in the early 1960s, I had a routine skin test for tuberculosis. Such tests were promoted by the Public Health Department at the time. I received a letter asking me to report for a chest X-ray as the test was positive. Dutifully I reported for the chest X-ray. I heard nothing more until a year or two later when I received another request to report for a chest X-ray. I again dutifully reported without question. Like clock-work, after a set period of time, I received the third request and again I reported for the X-ray. Thankfully, the doctor who checked my X-ray looked puzzled and asked: "Why are you having a chest X-ray so frequently?" Surprised, I said, "Since a skin test for T.B., I keep getting letters asking me to report for an X-ray." He replied, "Your chest is clear and I see no reason for you to subject yourself to unnecessary X-rays." Shortly after I received a letter from Public Health stating there was no further need for me to report for chest X-rays.

Like me, have you wholeheartedly trusted our medical system? Have you without question reported for an X-ray, rolled up your sleeve for a vaccine, or opened your mouth for mercury?

Like me, have you trusted the government to know what is best for you? Has fear for your health and safety led you to believe the government will keep you safe? And could our fear and desire to be safe, be giving our governments power to curb our freedom?

What Have We Created?

Have our obedient and trusting actions allowed a government to grow and create more and more rules with no end in sight? Have we created a bureaucratic monster that has difficulty responding to differing needs and choices?

Bureaucrats, government employees who manage the business of government, develop regulations for elected representatives to consider. Regulations to control the manufacture of Natural Health Products, for one, have been increasing at a particularly rapid rate. We are told these regulations are needed to protect our safety. Since Natural Health Products have a long history of safe use, why are onerous regulations needed to protect our safety? Is there another reason for the regulations?

Bureaucrats are pulling Natural Health Products into a regulatory environment used for pharmaceutical drugs. Is this necessary? Regulations for the safety, as well as for the efficacy, of pharmaceutical drugs are needed. With pharmaceuticals, there is a level of risk or the potential for harm as a result of side-effects. This means costly research must be conducted so the benefits of the drug can be weighed in relation to the potential for harm. Why sweep Natural Health Products, with a sterling safety record, into this costly regulatory fold? Who benefits?

With a rapidly growing trend to use Natural Health Products, large multi-national pharmaceutical companies have been attracted to the industry. These large companies can readily meet the expense of onerous regulations—regulations that force smaller companies out of business. The larger companies, therefore, capture the market. The regulatory process favors the interests of large, multi-national companies at the expense of smaller companies—smaller companies who may be providing excellent products that some of us rely on.

Is this in our best interest?

How the Bureaucracy Grows

How did we create such a cumbersome bureaucracy—our clumsy colossus? Disease often frightens us. For example, the word 'cancer' has become synonymous with fear. The industry



and the media feed our fear. Our fear contributes to the clamor for government to find answers for us and protect our health. We trust government to do it for us. This means government must hire more employees—people that swell the ranks of the bureaucracy ... our clumsy colossus grows and grows.

We want the best for our health. We lead busy lives so when illness strikes, we want a fast solution that allows us to return to our usual lifestyle as quickly as possible. Instead of researching the options—both medical and natural—we rely on government agencies such as the Food and Drug Administration (FDA) or Health Canada to give us the answers. Do these agencies, bloated with bureaucrats, have our best interests at heart?

There is a revolving door between the pharmaceutical industry and our government health agencies. Many working within the FDA in the US, for example, were formerly employed by the pharmaceutical industry or go on to positions within the pharmaceutical industry when they leave government.¹

One US Senator has accused “ ... the agency of making the pharmaceutical industry the ‘FDA's first client’ when that client should be the American people.”²

Do we recognize this as a conflict of interest, or are we getting so used to self-serving officials that we accept this behavior as normal?

Our trust in government to do what is best for our health has allowed often well-meaning people within the bureaucracy to make decisions that may not be in our best interests. With the dominance of the medical and pharmaceutical industries, the bureaucracy is made up of individuals with either medical or pharmaceutical backgrounds. In addition to bureaucratic bias, the huge profits that come from patented drugs support lobbyists—individuals who apply pressure to elected representatives to ensure that government protects the interests of their clients. Special interest groups such as the pharmaceutical industry hire lobbyists to influence politicians and government bureaucrats. The groups with the most money hire the most lobbyists and have the most influence. Our politicians often rely on these individuals and their information to decide how to vote.

In 2003, when a Medicare Reform bill was before Congress, Dr. Ron Paul, a US Congressman, stated, “The pharmaceutical industry reportedly spent \$135 million in recent months lobbying for the new Medicare bill. This speaks volumes about how seriously they viewed the stakes involved.” He spoke out to declare that, “Pharmaceutical companies are the biggest winners under the new plan. ... Large drug makers will become virtual partners with government, lobbying to make sure their drugs are part of the new system.”³

In Canada and other countries, including those in the European Union, government-sponsored medical systems are well established. The medical and pharmaceutical industries work smoothly with government bureaucracies ensuring the established system dominates. The system keeps control by using government, the media and special interest groups to influence regulations and by discrediting other health modalities including Natural Health. Our health regulators are focused only on rules, regulations, sickness and disease. They have forgotten that health is about living life to the fullest. Richard Schultz, an herbalist and natural health practitioner sums up for us:

Natural healing is all about having a longer, healthier and happier life, free of disease and illness with endless energy to do the things we want. But it is especially about being free from the oppressive medical and pharmaceutical giants. If they have their way we will become a nation, a world, of sickly drug addicts working our lives away to pay for their torture. In order to break free we must take full responsibility for ourselves, grab control of our lives and make changes in the way we live, act and think. This is a very critical time in our nation and the choices we make over the next few years will alter the direction of this planet.⁴

Do you accept that government bureaucrats know what is best? Bureaucrats are individuals with their own opinions—they have a bias as many of us do. We may not agree with their opinion, just as you and your neighbor may differ in your views.

***Would you want your neighbor deciding what is best for your health?
If not, why would you want bureaucrats deciding for you?***

Bureaucracy Controls ...

Our bureaucratic colossus has become so all-powerful that parents' risk losing their kids if they want to choose a natural treatment over treatments approved by the bureaucracy. Stephen was diagnosed with leukemia when he was two years old. The family followed the advice of the oncologist and Stephen received regular chemotherapy treatments. One of Stephen's cousins had died of leukemia after the approved chemotherapy treatments, so Stephen's parents decided to check out natural therapies as well.

They consulted a naturopathic physician who outlined a program to support Stephen's immune system. His mother reported:

We started seeing changes right away. He hardly got sick—no colds, no coughs and his immune system was very strong. It made a big difference. Even the pediatric oncologist was amazed at how Stephen hardly got sick. Medical tests at the hospital were showing that his blood counts were going up. His red blood cell counts went up, platelet counts went up, and white blood cell counts went up. The doctor was puzzled because he couldn't figure out why those blood counts would not go down, as is the pattern during chemotherapy. He was amazed ...

So after we took Stephen to the holistic doctor, we wanted to stop the chemotherapy. The pediatric oncologist would not let us stop and said that if we did, Stephen would become custody of the state. We told him they couldn't do that because he is our son. The oncologist said that he's a minor so he is under the protection of the government. Even though the blood tests from the hospital and from our holistic doctor showed that he was in remission and that he was improving on the blood counts, they still forced us to continue with chemotherapy. This created a big problem for us. We did

not want him to go through chemo anymore, as we knew what it was doing to his little body. So, we put double the effort into the natural side of everything. It really made a difference. ...

At the time Stephen was diagnosed, there were 19 other children that were diagnosed with him. Out of those 19, there are only three children alive today and Stephen is one of them. The other two surviving children were also on a nutritional program.⁵

His mother shared this experience when Stephen was nine years old—seven years after his treatments.

Question Laws

We live in a time when we need to question the laws that govern us. Just because they are laws does not make them right. We accept and support an educational system that doesn't teach kids to think for themselves, to question, or examine our society and government laws. We are creating another generation who will not question those in positions of authority, who will assume those in positions of authority have our best interests at heart, are dedicated to protecting our health, will act for the good of the whole, and will not be influenced by money, power or their personal biases. We need to think for ourselves and we need to teach our children to think for themselves.

A Short History of Medicine

I have an earache ...

2000 BC - Here, eat this root.

1000 AD - That root is heathen.

Here, say this prayer.

1850 AD - That prayer is superstition.

Here, drink this potion.

1940 AD - That potion is snake oil.

Here, swallow this pill.

1985 AD - That pill is ineffective. Here, take this antibiotic.

2000 AD - That antibiotic is artificial.

Here, eat this root.

We need to question laws that limit our freedom. We may come to a point where we will need to take a stand for freedom—no matter what the law.

Rather than pointing fingers of blame, perhaps it is time for each of us to reflect on how we have helped to create the clumsy colossus. We need to learn to think for ourselves. We need to take total responsibility for our actions and our lives. Are we tolerant of the differences among us? Do we respect those who believe differently than we do? Do we respect people with different religious beliefs, people of different races, and people who choose different health therapies? Are we willing to stand up for someone else's freedom?

You and I have allowed this clumsy colossus to control our lives. When we as individuals tolerate and respect differences, when we are willing to stand for someone else's freedom even if we don't agree with them, we will take a giant step to reduce the colossus.

Government reflects us. Instead of a government that makes us accountable to it, we will make government accountable to us. Instead of a government that encroaches on our freedoms by convincing us we need protection from ourselves and each other, we will create a government that respects our ability to make decisions for ourselves.

The Role of Government

What is the role of government? Should government health regulators be able to dictate what we can access for our personal health? Currently, our system assumes we are not intelligent enough to make our own decisions with regards to our health. Regulations have been created with a bias for established medical and pharmaceutical systems. Regulations continually erode our freedom and choices. The system assumes regulations are needed to protect us from ourselves and each other.

What role should our government play in our health?

Imagine a government that sees its role as educational—a role that emphasizes how to be healthy. Our government could issue suggestions for health protocols and therapies for specific illnesses ... drawing from both medical and natural health therapies. Our government could create a regulatory environment for safety, while protecting personal freedom. When products have high risks with side-effects, such as many pharmaceutical drugs, then government could get involved with regulations to assess whether the benefits outweigh the potential for harm. For products with a history of safe use, such as Natural Health Products, the freedom of the individual to choose would be paramount. This would give us the freedom to access information and products as well as address concerns for safety.

Imagine a government that values and respects personal freedom.

Taking Responsibility

When we take responsibility for our own health choices; when we respect our differences by allowing others the freedom to choose their health products and therapies; when we respect the views of others even on controversial issues; when we see each other as intelligent beings capable of making our own decisions—we will pave the way for a government that respects personal freedoms.

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