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October 8, 2003

AN ENLIGHTENED AMERICAN HEALTH CARE SYSTEM

By Harry Braun

In a signed statement from over 7,700 Medical Doctors that was published in the August 13th issue of the *Journal of the American Medical Association*, American health care HMOs that were thought to be health care's bright hope a few years ago, have only raised Medicare costs by billions of dollars while simultaneously and substantially reducing services to patients. The physicians argued that private sector solutions have failed, and as such, they are advocating a government financed national health insurance system that would cover every American. They believe such an approach will save billions of dollars in annual health care costs over the current privatization systems that primarily benefit pharmaceutical drug companies and physicians.

Many elderly patients are taking so many different drugs, which of course interact with each other in the body, that they need "pill organizers" to try and keep track of their confusing intake of medications. The investor-owned hospital chains have been plagued with scandals, and the drug firms, whose lobbying has secured the highest profits and lowest taxes of any industry, price drugs out of the reach of those who need them most. In case after case, the cost of drugs in the U.S. are often 3-times higher than the same drugs that are made available to patients in Europe or Asia.

Medicine for Profit

Glen Friedman, M.D., a physician who specialized in preventative and pediatric medicine, once made the comment that when most parents would bring their children to the doctor, the doctor should simply encourage the parents to wait a few days, and let the child's own immune system resolve the problem, which will happen in the vast majority of cases. Why don't doctors inform their patients of this "physician's secret?" You guessed it. Commission. A number of years ago, Dick Cavett had a dentist as a guest on his program who appeared with a mask on his face. The dentist explained that he was wearing a mask because he did not want his patients and colleagues to know who he was, and his story was that he and many of his colleagues had a habit of drilling perfectly good teeth in order to increase their business. He indicated that none of his patients ever questioned his need for "drilling and filling," and they never sought a second opinion.

There are two kinds of physicians, those who do it for the science, and those who do it as a business. The only way to resolve this obvious conflict of interest, is to take the profit motive out of medicine. Is there anyone who doubts that where interest lies, honor dies? If a doctor or dentist were on salary instead of commission, the natural human tendency is to not to do any more work than required, thereby eliminating unnecessary medical and dental procedures. How can anyone be expected to trust the recommendation of a physician who operates on commission? If a doctor stands to earn thousands of dollars on an operation, do you really think his opinion does not have a direct conflict of interest? Analysts estimate that more than half of all surgery is unnecessary, and given the enormous risks that are associated with any invasive surgical procedure, it is not just a question of money. Indeed, the 10th leading cause of death in the U.S. is when patients who enter hospitals acquire a fatal infection from one of the other patients. Over 300,000 people die annually in the U.S. from this problem, which makes the hospital a very hazardous place a sick person to be.

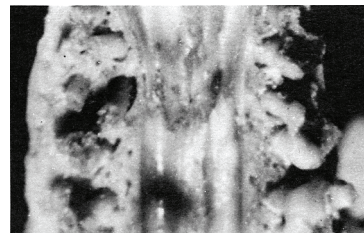
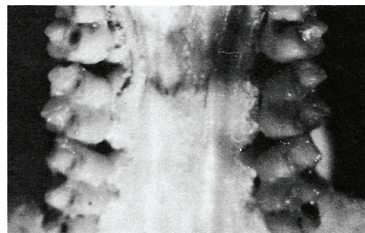
Sunshine & Health

While infectious microorganisms, such as the pathogenic Staphylococcus and other bacteria, have developed immunities to most antibiotics, they have never been able to adapt to the 290 nanometer wavelength ultraviolet energy that exists in natural outdoor sunlight. As such, one of the most immediate changes that hospitals can make would be to install fluorescent lamps that simulate the ultraviolet balance found in natural outdoor sunlight. In the case of hospitals and other health care facilities, the installation of sunlight-simulating fluorescent lamps will help to turn sick buildings into healthy ones.

While the news media have provided the general public with an abundance of articles that discuss the risks associated with over-exposure to sunlight, which can indeed cause skin cancer or death, extensive clinical research data has also documented that a lack of sunlight will also result in profoundly negative impacts on human health. It is a question of balance. Exposure to sunlight is similar to exposure to water. If one gets too much water, one drowns. On the other hand, water in moderate, daily amounts is absolutely critical for human survival and health. So it is with exposure to the natural outdoor environment. While some dermatologists argue that any exposure to ultraviolet wavelengths is dangerous, a wide-range of critical metabolic functions, such as Vitamin D3 formation absolutely requires the highly energetic 290 nm ultraviolet wavelength photons. If individuals are deprived of exposure to the ultraviolet radiation found in sunlight, the calcium in the diet cannot be absorbed by the body and is excreted in the waste, forcing the bodies to leach the calcium from the teeth and bones, a major medical problem that only intensifies with age.

Harvard Golden Hamster Study

In a study conducted by investigators at Harvard University's School of Dental Medicine, 60 golden hamsters were raised under identical conditions (in terms of diet and exercise) except the types of fluorescent lamps the animals were exposed to. Half of the hamsters were housed under full spectrum lamps that simulated the natural outdoor environment, and the other half were placed under the "cool white" lamps that are in widespread use. After 15 weeks of exposure the animals were sacrificed and examined. The animals in the cool white environments had 500 percent more tooth decay, and the caries were 10 times as large as the animals that were raised under the full spectrum lamps. Moreover, the animals raised under the cool white lamps had smaller bodies, hearts and sex organs, and the males had no sperm production. Other significant histological differences were also observed in the submandibular gland structures.



Note that the molar teeth from the hamsters that were raised under full spectrum fluorescent lamps (upper left) had normal tooth decay, whereas the molar teeth from a hamster raised under cool white lamps (right) had 500% more tooth decay, and the caries were 10 times larger than normal.

Building Codes

Ordinary window glass reflects or absorbs the most "biologically active" ultraviolet spectra of natural outdoor sunlight, and since the 1940's, air conditioning systems have allowed architects to design buildings with windows that cannot be opened -- or without windows at all. Fluorescent lamps that simulate the natural outdoor environment have been available since the 1960s, yet hospitals, schools and most office buildings continue to use "cool white" lamps that have no germicidal effects and been shown to cause serious physiological and psychological problems in humans and other mammals. While the cost of sunlight simulating fluorescent lamp is 4 times more expensive than cool white lamps, this price differential would disappear if the sunlight simulating lamps were to displace cool white lamps on a large scale.

This issue has come to the attention of a wide range of distinguished scientists, including Dr. Richard J. Wurtman, professor of endocrinology and metabolism at the Massachusetts Institute of Technology (MIT). Wurtman also lectures at the Harvard Medical School where he received his M.D. degree in 1960. In his landmark paper, "The Effects of Light on the Human Body," published in *Scientific American* in July 1975, Wurtman stated that only minimal sums have been expended to characterize and exploit the biological effects of light, and very little has been done to protect citizens against potentially harmful or biologically inadequate lighting environments. Both government and industry have been satisfied to allow people who buy electric lamps . . . to serve as the unwitting subjects in a long-term experiment on the effects of artificial lighting on human health." Without government regulation, hospitals and other building owners will continue to

Molecular Medicine

At present, few people who realize that medical researchers are on the threshold of an era of molecular medicine that will make a biological transition to renewable resources inevitable. The ability to understand and change the genetic and amino acid codes that make up the molecules of life will surely be one of the most significant developments in human history, if not in the history of life itself. We are, in fact, witnessing the evolution of a new species: *Homo Immortalis*, which will be the ultimate result of the biocybernetic integration and evolution of computers, robotics, and molecular biology.

Given the exponential explosion of the understanding of science in general, and molecular biology and computer science in particular; the stunning rate of progress in biotechnology and nanotechnology is rapidly accelerating. As a result, more will be learned in the next ten years of medical science than has been learned from the beginning of time until now.

That points one to the ultimate question: Where is all of this leading? Research into the molecules of life is already having a profound global impact on medicine and medical research. Investigators are currently focused on repairing or replacing defective genes that cause disease. But in the not too distant future, protein-scale "biochips" will be able to engineer "designer genes" that will not only allow individuals to eliminate their biological mechanisms of aging and disease, but they will be able to select their molecular structure at will with atomic (i.e., atom by atom) precision. Thus, regardless of what genes they inherited, it will be possible for individuals to choose their physical characteristics, such as hair color, physical size, sex, or species. And if they don't like any aspect of their molecular structure, they can change it as easily as they do a document in their computer.

**Braun's Proposed
American Health Care Plan**

While this generation stands at the threshold of unprecedented developments in science and technology, the current American health care system is fundamentally flawed. The most immediate need is to create a non-profit Health Care System that would provide any necessary health care to any American citizen or guest that resides within the United States. Given that approximately 90% of all health care costs are expended on terminally ill patients in the last few months of their life, this is not an acceptable-cost benefit trade-off for a taxpayer funded health care system.

In many cases, the terminal patients would much prefer to simply end their pain and suffering at a time and place of their own choosing with a lethal injection, but such an option is illegal in most states. As part of any fundamental health care reform, this law needs to be changed to allow individuals, and not the state, to determine when and under what circumstances their death should occur.

In the proposed federally-funded Universal Health Care System for all American, prospective patients will be able to review a summary of the professional history of the attending physician, including the number of specific procedures he or she has participated in, and a statistical summary of the patient's outcome.

Some of the most important elements of maintaining one's health involve breathing pure air, drinking uncontaminated water, eating unprocessed natural foods, moderate daily exercise, avoiding contact with radioactive wastes, and having proper exposure to the electromagnetic energy found in natural outdoor sunlight. The major degenerative diseases that include heart attacks, strokes and cancer are typically environmentally induced diseases that begin in childhood. True solutions to polluted air and water, highly-processed junk food and a sedentary lifestyle that takes place in a "sick" building are not fundamentally found in drugs or surgery. What is required is shifting to a pollution-free solar hydrogen economy and emphasizing education that will encourage individuals to adopt fundamentally healthy lifestyles. It is also important for the Environmental Protection Agency and other federal public health agencies to provide appropriate building and lighting codes and specifications that are based on the best available scientific evidence.

As the era of molecular medicine and designer genes approaches, there is every reason to be optimistic that in the mean time, the taxpayer-funded California Health Care System will be reorganized as a non-profit system that will be focused on providing the citizens of California with the best possible medical care at the lowest reasonable cost possible.



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