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Preserving Constitutional Liberties 09-03-2006

[Dave Hodges](#)

I Scream, You Scream, We All Should Scream At "TEENSCREEN"

Screening the mental health of children for suicidal tendencies is a noble idea worth pursuing. Yet, when the screening is mandated by the President and is done without the knowledge and consent of parents, an eyebrow should be raised. When children, under this new program, are only medicated with the most expensive psychiatric drugs which contain 2 to 20 times higher suicide rates and are contraindicated for use by children, according to several expert individuals and organizations, all of America should begin to wonder what type of Police State and pharmaceutical money making scam President Bush is trying to force down the throats of America's children!

There is a looming battle for the psychological health and welfare of America's children. Eventually, all Americans, under President Bush's New Freedom Commission on Mental Health (NFC) will be screened and potentially treated for mental illness. The program will commence with the compulsory mental health testing of all 52 million school children and the 6.5 million adults who walk through doors of every school in America on any

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given weekday. Acting under the authority of the NFC, all 50 states are mandated to implement compulsory mental health screening. The screening exams are to be administered in kindergarten, fourth and ninth grade. The screening program requires no parental notification and carries the force of law. As is the case with vaccinations, it will eventually be mandatory!

In April of 2002, by Executive Order,¹ President George W. Bush convened a 22 member panel which sought to identify policies that could be implemented by all levels of government which would promote successful mental health treatment for all adults and children. ²

In July of 2003, the NFC formally recommended that schools were in the best position to commence the screening of all Americans beginning with America's students and school employees. ³ The NFC implemented their recommendations, in November of 2004, with a \$20 million dollar appropriation.

Not all Congressmen agreed with President Bush and his desire to screen the mental health of all American schoolchildren, especially without parental notification. In particular, Congressman Ron Paul, R-Texas, attempted to withhold funding for the mandatory mental health screenings as well as requiring parental consent prior to any screening through the introduction of an amendment to the Congressional NFC funding bill. Because of the intense lobbying efforts by Big Pharma, Paul's proposed amendment was soundly defeated.

Congressman Paul is a medical doctor and a member of the American Association of Physicians and Surgeons (AAPS). Congressman Paul cautions Americans that the most obvious beneficiary of this mental health screening legislation is none other than the omnipresent pharmaceutical industry. The AAPS is also on record as opposing the NFC legislation, which they say will result in mandatory psychological testing of all of America's school children without parental consent as well placing coercive pressure on parents to needlessly medicate with dangerous psychotropic drugs. ⁴

The planned testing of America's school children will be implemented in two parts. First, a screening process, implemented by TeenScreen, will be used to identify this new group of potential pharmaceutical customers. Secondly, the psychiatric drug-dispensing protocols of Texas Medication Algorithm Project (TMAP) will be utilized to ensure maximum profits by the pharmaceuticals by requiring that the most expensive psychiatric drugs on the market will be prescribed.

The primary purpose of the NFC and its sole pharmaceutical broker and screener, TeenScreen, is to make certain that only the newest, most expensive drugs are used through adherence to TMAP's standard of practice for treating mental illness in that State. Once TMAP procedures are adopted by a State, all psychiatrists must comply with the prescribed standard of care. For example, the antipsychotic drug, Haldol, whose patent has expired, costs about 8 cents per pill, or about \$2.50 per month, while the controversial antipsychotic, Zyprexa, which is still under patent to Eli Lilly, costs \$8 per pill or about \$250 per month. The more expensive Zyprexa is listed on the algorithm of treatment by TMAP, the far less expensive drug, Haldol, is not.

Several researchers, such as Robert Whitaker and David Healy, have published findings which demonstrate that antipsychotic drugs MAY temporarily reduce psychiatric symptoms in the short term. However, the long term benefits are highly questionable because of the existing evidence



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linking the newer family of expensive, antipsychotic drugs to a greater likelihood of destroying the mental and physical health of those persons who take them. In particular, this new class of drugs is reputed to be especially dangerous to younger patients. Furthermore, Whitaker reports that that the death rate of patients on the newer TMAP drugs, the atypical antipsychotic drugs like Eli Lilly's Zyprexa, is double that of patients taking the older, cheaper antipsychotic drugs like Haldol. 5

Healy found that the suicide rate for schizophrenics, under treatment, increased 20 times since the widespread use of the newer and much more expensive psychiatric drugs. 6

Why are these drugs continuing to be used despite serious questions as to their efficacy? Perhaps the answer lies in the fact that Eli Lilly has several undeniable ties to the Bush family, where George H. W. Bush was once a member of the board of directors. A sample of those who have been on the Eli Lilly payroll includes The National Alliance for the Mentally Ill (a recipient of Eli Lilly funding), former President George Herbert Walker Bush (one-time member of the Eli Lilly board of directors), former CEO of Enron, the late Ken Lay (one-time member of the Eli Lilly board of directors), George W. Bush's former director of Management and Budget, Mitch Daniels (a former Eli Lilly vice president), George W. Bush's Homeland Security Advisory Council member, Sidney Taurel (CEO of Eli Lilly)

Not surprisingly, Eli Lilly gave \$1.6 million dollars in campaign contributions during the 2000 election. Eighty two percent of this money went to Republicans and George W. Bush. The pharmaceutical and health products industry has spent more than \$800 million in federal lobbying and campaign donations at the federal and state levels in the past seven years. No other industry has spent more money to sway public policy during this same period. Public health and welfare be damned, and now, in order to increase their market share, the pharmaceuticals are coming after your children.

Under the auspices of George W. Bush, TMAP originated in Texas and has been exported under the umbrella of the NFC to at least 40 States. Under then-Texas Governor Bush, TMAP was allowed to gain virtual control of the diagnostic and treatment protocols for the Texas mental health and prison systems. It is interesting to note that in 1994, Big Pharma did not contribute one dime to Texas politicians. TMAP surfaced in Texas after the 1994 elections and subsequently, during the 1998 campaigns, it made over 250 contributions totaling \$152,000 to candidates running for state office. In 2002, it made more than 400 contributions totaling \$384,735, and poured tens of millions more money into Texas state universities which are intimately affiliated with TMAP. And the beat goes on as Big Pharma buys the politicians and the "Do No Harm" credo of the medical profession takes a backseat. 7, 8, 9

It also appears that a culture of corruption is following the exportation of TMAP to other States. Consider the case of whistleblower, Allen Jones, a former lead investigator at the Pennsylvania Office of the Inspector General (OIG). The Pennsylvania mental health treatment formulary is presently based on TMAP protocols. As the OIG's lead investigator, Jones uncovered evidence of payments into an "off-the-record (books) account". The accounts under Jones investigation were cleverly allocated for "educational grants" which were conveniently funded by Pfizer and Janssen Pharmaceuticals. Payments were made from the account to state employees who developed formulary guidelines, which were consistent with the TMAP algorithm whereby the new antipsychotic medications were the only drugs of choice available in the Pennsylvania formulary of psychiatric treatment. This practice

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resulted in recommending the far more expensive and newer drugs over older, cheaper drugs with proven track records. Jones' findings clearly showed that the pharmaceutical company, Janssen, had paid honorariums (i.e., legal bribes) to key state officials who held influence over which drugs would be prescribed in state-run prisons and mental hospitals. Instead of being hailed a hero for valiantly performing his role as a public servant, Jones was subsequently fired and escorted from the grounds of the OIG and told not to return. Even Ray Charles could see that the State of Pennsylvania and several of its key officials knowingly and willingly participated in a system of political bribery in partnership with the pharmaceuticals. A whistleblower, a true public servant, was steamrolled out of his job for daring to question both the legality and ethics of key State officials. The NFC school based mental health screening programs are being implemented in Pennsylvania next year. 10

TeenScreen, created by Laurie Flynn, arose out of the expressed desire of the NFC to test all American school children. There are several problems with this screening instrument. For example, the screening device has a high rate of false positives. The rigor (e.g., measure of reliability and validity, utilization of genuinely representative population samples used in the norming process) of the screening mechanics have also been called into question. Additionally, TeenScreen allows for the use of unsupervised nonprofessionals to both administer and interpret the screening instrument. In an effort to cover their malpractice behinds, TeenScreen is careful to state that the program is not a substitute for clinical evaluation. Despite its self-proclaimed message that TeenScreen has a wonderful diagnostic tool from which to predict suicidal behavior resulting from depression, TeenScreen states that the instrument is not a diagnostic tool. 11 If you had to reread the previous four sentences in order to try to make sense out of TeenScreens, "doublespeak," you are not alone. Although the diagnostic tool is not heralded as a clinical tool, the schools which use the TeenScreen tool can still label the child as being emotionally disturbed and this label can follow this child for the rest of their life. Further, school-initiated treatment protocols can be triggered as a result of the findings.

TeenScreen tries to entice teens into the trap of screening, from which they may never escape the clutches of the mental health profession, with promises of pizza coupons and movie tickets in exchange for their "willing" participation. Of course parents can take their children to their psychiatrist of choice and perhaps an alternative and less threatening diagnosis will be offered. Yet, if the child is one of the 40 million Americans that do not have medical insurance, how will their parents afford an expensive second opinion in which a real clinical diagnostic instrument would be used? The NFC, TMAP and TeenScreen represents a thinly veiled attempt to prey upon working class people and their children. Many of these children will undoubtedly become a permanent, chemically-dependent prisoner to the TeenScreen/TMAP system because they lack the options of a gaining a qualified second opinion.

TeenScreen's website proclaims that they are not associated with any pharmaceutical industry. This is like saying that bullets are not associated with guns. Pfizer contributed \$232,000 to TMAP start up and, under George W. Bush, Texas reciprocated and paid Pfizer \$233 million in tax dollars for drugs like Zoloft. Janssen Pharmaceuticals contributed \$224,000 to TMAP and received a return of \$272 million for Risperdal. The Bush's pharmaceutical golden child, Eli Lilly, won the George W. Bush version of the Texas State pharmaceutical lottery as it only contributed \$109,000 and collected over \$328 million for Zyprexa. It is clear that the pharmaceutical industry contributed the start up funds for TMAP while receiving a

tremendous return on their investment. Screening agent, TeenScreen and the sole medicating agent, TMAP, are implemented in lockstep. Maybe all the people really can be fooled all the time.

In 2002, TeenScreen contracted with the public relations firm of Rabin Strategic Partners to provide each teen in the United States with easy access to this free mental health screening program. Rabin's marketing efforts have proven to be a huge success. Rabin provided TeenScreen with a 10 year marketing strategy. The marketing plan calls for an intense public relations plan including lobbying and advertising in order to expand and implement the plan. TeenScreen's use of Rabin's marketing strategy is paying great returns. For example, a 2004 progress report stated, mental health screening programs are now established in over 100 communities in 34 states. Further the report added that a total of 19 national groups have approved the screening of our youth's mental health. Disturbingly, Rabin claims a waiting list of 250 communities which have expressed interest in the screening program. 12

The lobbying efforts have also paid tremendous dividends as there are three related bills pending in Congress and several state governments are working on plans to spread screening programs statewide. This miraculous market penetration has been achieved in only four short years. TeenScreen currently claims a market penetration in 40 states (see www.teenscreen.org).

Big Pharma's DNA permeates the development of the NFC as they cleverly "cook the books" to establish their legitimacy. Through the creation of the pharma-friendly NFC policy supporting "experts", they have succeeded in greatly expanding the scope of disease while simultaneously narrowing the treatment parameters to a few set of very expensive drugs. Finally, the NFC is supporting shoddy screening and diagnosis in an effort to identify an endless reservoir of potential pharmaceutical customers. For example, one of the questions which appear on TeenScreen is:

1) Have you often felt nervous or uncomfortable when you have been with a group of children or young people - - say, like in the lunchroom at school or a party?

Who has not felt any of these feelings? As a nationally certified mental health counselor, and an instructor of research and statistical methods, I am left wondering if I was absent from class the day that these types of feelings were declared to be representative of a mental illness or emotional disturbance? If enough yes answers are given, the child may be referred to an "expert" for treatment (i.e., medication) purposes.

TeenScreen attempts to justify its thinly veiled money making machine program as being based on the fact that "700,000 teens are depressed" with the implication being that these children are at great risk of suicide. I would offer a couple of cautions here before taking TeenScreen's warnings at face value. To obtain a greater number of depressed patients, one merely has to alter the time frame that is being questioned. For example, if a child loses a pet, and spends 3 weeks mourning their loss, do they really need Zoloft, or will they bounce back without the use of mind-numbing drugs? Secondly, it has long been determined that depression is not the best predictor of suicide. Researchers such as Aaron Beck determined, a very long time ago, that hopelessness is the best predictor of suicide. I fail to see where TeenScreen has taken this well established fact into consideration.

It is indeed ironic that the TeenScreen instrument purports to screen for

suicide and the TMAP protocols will be dispensing drugs which have been linked to a higher incidence of suicide by its young users as compared to the earlier generation of antipsychotic medications.

The pseudoscience of TeenScreen and TMAP represent unadulterated and evil corporate greed for those who are engaging in system of legal bribery for untold amounts of money at the expense of our children's autonomy and welfare.

With the high level of reported false positive diagnostic rates and serious questions surrounding the safety of the use of the newer psychotropic medications on developing, young brains, how many children will be chemically destroyed before reaching adulthood? What has happened to parental rights? How many children will not be able to obtain health insurance because the questionable labeling practices of TeenScreen which are allowed under the NFC? Loss of parental rights and constitutional guarantees against the deprivation of life, liberty and pursuit of happiness are not the only threats of this cancer which is just beginning to sweep our country like an out of control tsunami.

If we, as adults, submit to this pharmaceutical greed and treachery, then we get what we deserve. Unfortunately, our children are not able to make the same informed choice. This country was founded on a spirit of civil disobedience. Thus, the answer seems obvious, refuse to participate in this mental health culture of corruption. If we do not capitulate, what is the government going to do, build a fence around the country and call it jail? We needlessly acquiesce every day to the intrusive demands of government as our bank accounts, emails, phone calls are monitored. "Granny" gets goosed by the TSA at the airport in name of national security, meanwhile, we totally leave our borders open to the very terrorists Bush claims to so desperately fear. Government keeps expanding and the citizens keep retreating. But we are not talking about debits, credits, phone calls and terrorism; we are speaking about the welfare of your child! Ultimately, this system of money-making pseudoscience needs your compliance to work. Look the intimidators in the face and just say NO!

Bush and his NFC cronies rely on threats, sanctions and intimidation to impose their agenda on all of us. It seems like we have forgotten that government is supposed to serve the people, not the other way around. Refusing to comply is our best response. However, I wonder if America has become to fat, lazy and cowardly to even protect our own children? If you are not willing to fight for your child on this issue, then you must ask yourself what is your child really worth to you? In amazement, I have watched this scenario unfold in the Illinois Public Schools, through the passage and implementation of the Illinois Mental Health Act, where several schools, covering 23 counties, are implementing TeenScreen and IMAP (the Illinois version of TMAP) as early as this school year. Several Illinois parents have protested, but all seemingly succumbed to the powers that be.

If your child's school district insists on playing the role of the thought police, then change schools. If every school in your State is hell bent on biochemically castrating your child's brain, then home school your child. If the Department of Education outlaws home schooling, then be willing to go to jail. News flash: Your children do not belong to George Bush, the NFC and Big Pharma! Your children look to you, their parents, to protect them from evils like the ones discussed here.

The American Hospital Formulary Service Drug Information (2005), states

that the FDA has determined that antidepressants increase the risk of suicidal ideation and behavior in children and teenagers. Pity the parent who has read this warning, who subsequently comes home from work to find that their child has become the next statistic in an ever growing number of suicidal behaviors which are associated with many of the new antipsychotic medications.

When TeenScreen and TMAP debut in your community, what will you do? I can unequivocally state that TeenScreen and the Big Pharma will never get their hands on my five year old son. Not now, not ever! Can you say the same for your child? For the good of your children, distribute this article to your family, friends, neighbors, local school board members and your elected representatives.

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