

LE Magazine September 2000

AS WE SEE IT

Life Extension Wins in the House and Senate

In a startling setback to the FDA and the drug cartel, a bill that enables Americans to legally obtain lower cost prescription drugs from other countries passed the House of Representatives on June 29, 2000. This is great news for consumers who have been paying inflated prices for their medications because the FDA inappropriately blocked the importation of less expensive drugs from other countries.

The pharmaceutical industry's panicked response has been to run full-page newspaper ads stating that prescription drugs from Mexico and Canada are somehow "counterfeit" and cannot be trusted. This is a truly remarkable allegation when one considers that the lower priced drugs from Canada and Mexico are often manufactured by these very same pharmaceutical companies.

The drug industry is using scare tactics that have no basis in fact to block Americans from gaining access to lower-cost prescription medications, and the FDA wholeheartedly supports the drug companies. American citizens, on the other hand, are revolting against outrageously high drug prices.

Congressman Gil Gutknecht, who introduced this successful health freedom legislation in the House, called me to personally thank Life Extension for supporting the bill. It was gratifying to learn that our drug price comparison chart, published earlier this year in Life Extension magazine, was enlarged and placed on the House floor during debate over this bill. This chart exposed the outrageously high prices Americans pay for their drugs compared to citizens of other countries. Congressman Gutknecht told me that our chart was instrumental in getting this bill passed.

On July 20, 2000, the Senate passed a similar bill—by a vote of 74-21—that allows pharmacists and wholesalers to import US-approved drugs available at lower prices overseas. The House bill, on the other hand, lets individuals buy drugs abroad, so a compromise measure is now being crafted.

Foundation members should know that just about everyone told us that we had no chance of winning on this issue. Many criticized us for squandering resources on something they said could not get by Congress because of drug company influence. In this case, our perseverance prevailed and we beat the drug companies in an unprecedented manner.

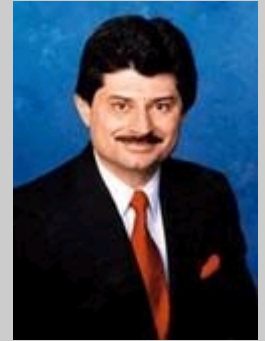
At The Life Extension Foundation, we long ago became accustomed to pessimists who said that we could not beat the Federal government in Court, that Congress would never pass a law permitting health claims on dietary supplements, and that the human life span could not be radically extended. Our 20-year string of victories has proven these mediocre thinkers wrong, and Foundation members should be proud to belong to an organization that relentlessly challenges the entrenched establishment.

Conventional medicine fails most Americans

You might think that since U.S. citizens pay the highest healthcare prices in the world, that the quality of medicine would be commensurate with the cost. According to the World Health Organization, this is not the case. A recently released study from the World Health Organization showed that the United States ranked 37th in overall health care quality, meaning that 36 countries are doing a better job than the U.S. at keeping their citizens healthy. The fact that countries who are ahead of the United States pay significantly less in health care costs indicates that there is something fundamentally flawed about the present FDA-protected health care monopoly. According to a health economist at Princeton University, the United States is very good at employing heroic expensive procedures, but poor at low-cost preventative care that keeps citizens of other countries healthier. This is not surprising when one looks at the FDA's 80-year reign of terror against those involved in preventive medicine.

New England Journal of Medicine attacks pharmaceutical industry

Anyone who reads the New England Journal of Medicine knows that this publication derives almost all of their advertising revenue from prescription drug advertising. That's what makes their blunt editorial against the pharmaceutical industry so credible.



William Faloon

This editorial, written by Dr. Marcia Angell, and published in the June 22, 2000 edition, accuses the pharmaceutical industry of hiding behind a cloak of “exaggerated or misleading” claims to justify high drug prices. Drug companies state that they need high prices to develop new cures and better treatments. But Angell argues that many of the new drugs that companies produce add little to therapeutic innovation except expense and confusion. This point has been repeatedly made in the pages of Life Extension magazine, with the basic argument being, How many “cures” for diseases has the pharmaceutical industry discovered in the past 30 years? The answer is very few. Some people say none.

The New England Journal of Medicine editorial depicts the industry as one in which top companies rake in huge profits, spend enormous amounts on questionable marketing and advertising practices and are free to charge inflated prices as a result of government-sanctioned monopolies. “The pharmaceutical industry is extraordinarily privileged. It benefits enormously from publicly funded research, government-granted patents and large tax breaks, and it reaps lavish profits,” says Dr. Angell.

Dr. Angell said that she is speaking out because the prices of drugs are rising so fast and the use of drugs is so great that it’s becoming a real problem for consumers. She also worries that the ongoing Congressional debate on a Medicare prescription drug benefit has largely focused on who will pay and the breadth of coverage instead of the price of the drugs themselves.

It should not be surprising that the Pharmaceutical Research and Manufacturers of America, which represents drug companies, issued a prepared statement blasting Dr. Angell’s point of view as “a complete distortion of the facts.”

Wall Street Journal exposes drug company propaganda

The July 6, 2000 issue of the Wall Street Journal also featured an article critical of the drug industry’s claims that high drug prices are needed to fund research. According to this article, the pharmaceutical industry is not delivering the kind of breakthroughs that were once promised. The Wall Street Journal pointed out that the drug industry still spends far more on salesmen than it does on scientists and that overall, the industry’s marketing and administration expenses are generally more than twice those of research and development. At Pfizer, for instance, marketing and administration make up 39% of expenses, compared with 17% for R&D.

Why these atrocities continue

Americans pay the highest prices in the world for sub-standard medical care. It’s easy to point fingers at the drug companies, but it is the FDA who provides the pharmaceutical giants with the immoral monopoly that allows them to rape the American consumer’s health and pocketbook. If the FDA were abolished, drug companies would have to get back to aggressive research and cut prices dramatically if they were to compete against the small biotech companies that are being held back by FDA red tape.

With the FDA out of the way, large and small companies would be free to offer novel therapies without having to spend hundreds of millions of dollars on FDA “approval.” An example of a small pharmaceutical company fighting its way through the FDA’s roadblock is Cell Pathways Inc., a publically traded company. Cell Pathways, Inc. is a pharmaceutical company focused on the development and commercialization of products targeted at the treatment and prevention of precancerous lesions and cancer. To date, the company has developed a library of over 500 potential cancer compounds, some of which are in various phases of FDA-sanctioned clinical trials. So far, very good test results have been released, including lower PSA levels in men at high risk for metastatic prostate cancer and decreased colon polyp levels in patients predisposed to this disease. The problem is that this company’s primary drug was discovered over four years ago, and two million American cancer patients have died waiting for the drug application to move through the FDA’s black hole. At the rate these drugs are dragging through the regulatory process, millions more cancer victims could be dead before official “approval” is ever granted. Since the FDA won’t release data from ongoing clinical trials, we at Life Extension cannot evaluate the efficacy of Cell Pathways’ drugs. The drugs do appear to be safe. Cancer patients may want to check the company’s website (www.cellpathways.com) to read the full story about these drugs and how to enter clinical studies being conducted around the United States.

The Life Extension Foundation’s solution to the problem of determining new drug efficacy is to allow private organizations to test drugs on volunteer terminally ill patients without first having to obtain FDA approval. In the case of the drugs developed by Cell Pathways, doctors could have known years ago whether they were safe and effective in humans. In today’s heavily regulated climate, on the other hand, terminally ill patients are denied access to promising therapies unless they meet the rigid criteria set by the FDA. This bureaucratic obstacle often dooms a drug to failure because the agency first demands the patients fail grueling rounds of toxic conventional therapy before being allowed to try the novel approach.

Some people still think the FDA protects us against dangerous drugs. As you will read in this month’s issue, when humanitarian FDA employees tried to alert the public about a dangerous drug, the FDA launched an internal affairs investigation and threatened these honorable people with imprisonment. This shocking fact was exposed by the Los Angeles Times and we have re-printed this report in its entirety in a story entitled, “The Rise and Fall of the Killer Drug Rezulin.”

All of this further substantiates The Life Extension Foundation’s long-standing position that the FDA’s primary focus is on protecting the profits of the large drug companies and not in safeguarding the consumer against dangerous drugs. As a Foundation member, you should be encouraged that a growing number of Judges, members of Congress and the media are recognizing the

health fraud being perpetrated against the American public by the FDA.



William Faloon Vice President, Life Extension Foundation

[Back to the Magazine Forum](#)

All Contents Copyright © 1995-2009 Life Extension Foundation All rights reserved.



These statements have not been evaluated by the FDA. These products are not intended to diagnose, treat, cure or prevent any disease. The information provided on this site is for informational purposes only and is not intended as a substitute for advice from your physician or other health care professional or any information contained on or in any product label or packaging. You should not use the information on this site for diagnosis or treatment of any health problem or for prescription of any medication or other treatment. You should consult with a healthcare professional before starting any diet, exercise or supplementation program, before taking any medication, or if you have or suspect you might have a health problem. You should not stop taking any medication without first consulting your physician.