

Big Pharma's Mass Vaccination Agenda: Propaganda Assault on Informed Consent

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Major US news media have presented a grossly distorted and misleading interpretation of vaccines and their relationship to public health since early January. These journalistic organs have suggested the recent measles outbreak in the Western US has been a crisis of monumental proportions.

This flagrant and cynical sensationalism has become a foundation for intense advocacy on behalf of the pharmaceutical corporate and regulatory cartel targeting patient informed consent—a founding principal of modern medical practice and personal freedom. Keeping in mind the close to 300 vaccine products now in the pharmaceutical industry's pipeline,[1] closer analysis of "measles outbreak" press coverage suggests a conscious effort by corporate news media to virtually banish such notions and practices from the public mind. A news media dependent on over \$1 billion in advertising dollars from big pharma must almost by necessity indulge their clients' broader agenda.

David Dees (right)



An impartial journalistic approach to the question of vaccination and personal choice would provide equal and unprejudiced airing of "both sides," in addition to the varied grey areas in the debate, from the corporate and statist entities flying the banner of mandatory vaccination to cautious segments of the citizenry voicing reservations toward such technology alongside the foremost prerogative of personal choice.

A LexisNexis search of US newspaper and wire service articles from December 28, 2015—the official start date of the California measles outbreak—to February 8, 2015 [2] using the search terms "measles" and "vaccination" yields 799 press releases or wire stories and 746 newspaper articles and opinion pieces. Much of this coverage predictably emphasizes the array of vaccine-friendly assumptions and pronouncements from entities abetting the pharmaceutical industry's long-term profit-specific objectives.

For example, the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention is, alongside the Food and Drug Administration, the most powerful bureaucratic arm utilized by the global pharmaceutical cartel to elicit compliance with the federal vaccine schedule for children from the medical profession and broader population. Of the article sample referenced above, close to one-third (517) reference the "Centers for Disease Control" or "CDC" in their text, suggesting citation of the agency and its policies to persuasively instruct readers on vaccine efficacy and safety.

In contrast, the same body of over 1,500 press releases, news stories and editorials reference “informed consent” only three times—and when the term *is* used it is done so either in passing or to disparage the practice itself. For example, Arthur Caplan, a professor of medicine at New York University, warns against doctors *even considering* the practice of informed consent in regard to vaccines. “The science is unimpeachable,” Caplan proclaims. “Vaccines do not cause autism; measles is dangerous and contagious; inoculating against the disease is neither pointless nor riskier than abstention.” The physician then amazingly suggests that genuine informed consent—explaining how a vaccine such as Measles, Mumps, Rubella, which can severely injure, incapacitate, or kill the child patient—must be categorically replaced by the dissemination of pharmaceutical industry propaganda and half-truths. “Those doctors who counsel otherwise – who distort what patients need to know to preserve their health or that of their children – have crossed a bright red line. They have violated a patient’s right to informed consent, which depends on accurate information.”[3]

The foremost US organization advocating the fundamental doctrine of informed consent, the [National Vaccine Information Center](#), is referenced a paltry 22 times in the sizable article sample. And while the NVIC routinely emphasizes that it is not “anti-vaccine” and merely advocates that patients or their parents fully understand the risks associated with the industrialized, “one size fits all” immunization process, it is nevertheless framed as the official voice of “anti-vaccination.” A recent *New York Times* article from the data set is exemplary of this practice. “Members of the anti-vaccine movement said the public backlash had terrified many parents. ‘People are now afraid they’re going to be jailed,’ said Barbara Loe Fisher, the president of the National Vaccine Information Center, a clearinghouse for resisters.”[4]

Of the 746 articles published in newspapers, 143 are editorial and opinion pieces. Almost without exception each vigorously supports wide-scale vaccination, even proposing punitive measures for those clinging to informed consent and personal choice. Such uniform opinion among newsroom management provides a clear indication of exactly how warped the overall news coverage of the “measles outbreak” has been.

“If we’re not willing to permanently exile anti-vaxxers from the public square,” one opinion in the *Philadelphia Daily News* remarks, “we should at least make emergency provisions to do so. Anti-vaxxers should be made to understand that when there is a public-health emergency – such as a measles outbreak – they’ll be quarantined for the duration.”[5] “Those who refuse to vaccinate are wrong,” the *Salt Lake Tribune* argues. “They endanger themselves and those around them.”[6] “The growing anti-vaccination movement is one of the most frustrating developments of this decade,” the *San Jose Mercury News* similarly contends. “Some of the parents who mistrust vaccine are uneducated and have no access to pediatric counsel, but there’s no excuse for the irresponsible parents who have access to the latest science yet irrationally fear that vaccines are not safe for their children.”[7]

In an effort to console parents concerned about the very real possibility of vaccines causing autism, US government press releases and US news outlets alike reference a 1998 study authored by British physician and medical scientist Andrew Wakefield linking vaccination to Crohn’s disease and autism. “Public health officials blame a decline in parents having their kids vaccinated that began after a now-thoroughly discredited 1998 British report alleged that common early childhood vaccinations triggered autism,” the *San Diego Union Tribune* grouses. “Unfortunately, that discredited report continues to be cited by know-nothing celebrities and vapid New Age authors who broadly reject modern medicine. They do so

even as life expectancy hits all-time highs and medical researchers make steady progress on many fronts.”[8]

The US government’s own public relations service—US Official News—likewise chimes in on Wakefield’s alleged deceit. “A 1998 article in the medical journal *The Lancet* caused a firestorm of controversy when it was published and helped create the anti-vaccine movement that continues today,” one US government press release reads. “There’s only one problem—the article was later retracted by the publisher for being ‘utterly false,’ and the author, Andrew Wakefield, was found to have been paid big bucks by plaintiffs’ lawyers.”[9]

The fact that Wakefield’s 1998 findings have been upheld in 19 peer-reviewed papers he has contributed to the literature between 1998 and 2010, in addition to 28 studies from other scientists around the world [10] has been consciously overlooked by US newspaper editors and other drug industry propagandists. That this key piece of disinformation—soundly rebutted in the published research—continues to be repeated by journalists and government publicists alike suggests the hardcore disinformation tactics deployed to perpetuate the misunderstanding and unwarranted faith the majority of US families continue to place in big pharma’s immensely profitable vaccine agenda.

As direct result of this well-coordinated publicity campaign and resulting hysteria the legal right by which families may exercise informed consent is now under intense legal assault across the US. “Hearings to remove philosophical/conscientious exemptions to vaccine mandates have already taken place in Washington and Oregon,” NVIC reports.

California, Maine, Minnesota, Pennsylvania, Texas, and Vermont all have bills already filed or press announcements of bills about to be filed to remove philosophical/conscientious exemptions. Maine, Minnesota and Texas have bills to substantially restrict philosophical/conscientious exemptions. Religious exemptions are also under attack. Maryland, New Jersey, Texas and Vermont have bills filed or announced to eliminate religious exemptions, and Illinois, New Mexico and Texas have bills filed or announced to unconstitutionally restrict religious exemptions.

In addition, Connecticut, Florida, Indiana, Maine, Maryland, Montana, Nebraska, Nevada, New York, Pennsylvania, Tennessee, Texas, Vermont, Virginia, and West Virginia all have legislation underway to expand vaccine mandates.[11]

In light of the above one should be unsurprised at the mob-like antipathy toward “anti-vaxxers,” and how the notions of personal liberty and informed consent have been made to appear increasingly bizarre by being effectively stricken from public discourse. The population has been expertly propagandized on the issue by medical practitioners, their professional associations, and regulatory agencies tethered to the pharmaceutical industry’s agenda vis-a-vis a news media reliant on drug advertising revenue. With these observations in mind one must seriously ask themselves, In what meaningful way would a wholly scientific authoritarianism differ from what is witnessed in America today?

Notes

[1] [Medicines in Development: A Report on the Prevention and Treatment of Disease Through Vaccines](#), Pharmaceutical Researchers and Manufacturers of America, 2013.

- [2] Jennifer Zipprich, Kathleen Winter, et al, "[Measles Outbreak - California, December 2014-February 2015](#)," Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, February 20, 2015.
- [3] Arthur Caplan, "Quacks Against Vaccines? Revoke Their Licenses," *Washington Post*, February 8, 2015.
- [4] Jack Healy and Michael Paulson, "[Vaccine Critics Turn Defensive Over Measles](#)," *New York Times*, January 31, 2015.
- [5] Joel Mathis and Ben Boychuck, "[The Vaccination Debate Continues](#)," *philly.com*, February 9, 2015.
- [6] "Washington Post: Measles in America," *Salt Lake Tribune*, February 3, 2015.
- [7] "[Disneyland's Measles is a Hard Lesson in How Vaccines Work](#)," *San Jose Mercury News*, January 29, 2015.
- [8] "[Anti-Vaccination Charlatans Take Toll on Public Health](#)," *San Diego Times Union*, January 19, 2015.
- [9] "Flashback: The Anti-Vaccine Movement and a Trial Lawyer-Funded Climate of Fear," Plus Media Solutions/US Official News, February 17, 2015.
- [10] Joseph Mercola, "Why Medical Authorities Went to Such Extremes to Silence Dr. Andrew Wakefield," *Mercola.com*, April 10, 2010, <http://articles.mercola.com/sites/articles/archive/2010/04/10/wakefield-interview.aspx>
- [11] "[You Need to Act Now: Vaccine Exemptions and Mandates Threatened in Even More States](#)," National Vaccine Information Center, February 23, 2015.

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James F. Tracy was a tenured Associate Professor of Journalism and Media Studies at Florida Atlantic University from 2002 to 2016. He was fired by FAU ostensibly for violating the university's policies imposed on the free speech rights of faculty. Tracy has filed a federal civil rights lawsuit against the university, with trial set to begin November 27, 2017. Tracy received his PhD from University of Iowa. His

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