

how weakened they were) during development and testing.

Dr. Sidney Wolfe, director of Public Citizen's Health Research Group, says the plan to limit corporate liability is "hypocrisy at the very least." Even some in the drug industry feel it goes too far.

Not surprisingly, the foundation has financial backing from some of the biggest names in the pharmaceutical industry, including Bristol-Myers Squibb Co., Eli Lilly & Co., and Marion Merrell Dow. Another drug manufacturer, Glaxo, has given an undisclosed amount to the foundation, in addition to contributions of approximately \$325,000 to the Republican Party and Republican candidates. As a whole, the drug industry contributed more than \$1.6 million to the Republican Party in the 1993-94 election cycle.

SSU Censored Researcher:
Tina Duccini

COMMENTS: Author Leslie Weiss said the plan to strip the FDA of its power did not receive sufficient coverage in the mass media. "Once I learned of the Progress & Freedom Foundation's (PFF) proposal to gut the FDA, I was surprised at the lack of coverage it received. When PFF released the report, it received coverage only in the *Wall Street Journal* (and then, of course, in *Mother Jones*)."

When asked why the general

public should know more about this issue, Weiss said, "For most of us, reliance on therapeutic drugs and devices for healing is second nature. We expect quality and depend on the FDA to ensure it. Our lives depend on it. Any discussion of altering the safeguards that protect us from potentially dangerous drugs or medical devices must take place in a public forum; otherwise, we risk falling victim—financially and physically—to what easily could become an unregulated industry."

Weiss charged, "Drug and medical device producers, with their well-financed lobbying armies, are the only beneficiaries of limited media coverage on this subject. Reduced safety regulations and clinical testing periods reduce their costs by millions of dollars. So does reducing liability regulation."

7 CENSORED

Russia Injects Earth With Nuke Waste

Source:

THE NEW YORK TIMES

Date: 11/21/94

Title: "Poison in the Earth:

A special report; Nuclear
Roulette for Russia: Burying
Uncontained Waste," *

Author: William J. Broad

SYNOPSIS: For more than three decades, the Soviet Union and now Russia secretly pumped billions of gallons of atomic waste directly into the earth and, according to Russian scientists, the practice continues today.

The scientists said Moscow had injected about half of all the nuclear waste it ever produced into the ground at three widely dispersed sites, all thoroughly wet and all near major rivers. The three sites are at Dimitrovgrad near the Volga River, Tomsk near the Ob River, and Krasnoyarsk on the Yenisei River. The Volga flows into the Caspian Sea and the Ob and Yenisei flow into the Arctic Ocean.

The injections violate the accepted rules of nuclear waste disposal, which require it to be isolated in impermeable containers for thousands of years. The Russian scientists claim the practice is safe because the wastes have been injected under layers of shale and clay, which in theory cut them off from the Earth's surface.

But the wastes at one site already have leaked beyond the expected range and "spread a great distance," the Russians said. They did not say whether the distance was meters or kilometers or whether the poisons had reached the surface.

They began injecting the waste as a way to avoid the kind of surface-storage disasters that began to plague them in the 1950s. But by

any measure, the injections were one of the Cold War's darkest secrets.

The amount of radioactivity injected by the Russians is up to three billion curies. By comparison, the accident at the Chernobyl nuclear power plant released about 50 million curies of radiation, mostly in short-lived isotopes that decayed in a few months. The accident at Three Mile Island discharged about 50 curies. The injected wastes include cesium-137, with a half life of 30 years, and strontium-90, with a half life of 28 years and a bad reputation because it binds readily with human bones.

The Russians are now working with the U.S. Department of Energy to try to better predict how far and fast the radioactive waste is likely to spread through aquifers.

At best, the Russian waste may stay underground long enough to be rendered largely harmless by the process of radioactive decay.

At worst, it might leak to the surface and produce regional calamities in Russia and areas downstream along the rivers. If the radioactivity spreads through the world's oceans, experts say, it might prompt a global rise in birth defects and cancer deaths.

At the least, the media should be reporting what progress is being made by the Department of Energy to monitor this potentially horrendous disaster.

Exhibit "5-1"

SSU Censored Researcher:
Vanessa Mann

COMMENTS: Given the potential scope of this radioactive waste disaster, relatively little media attention appeared following the original *New York Times* story on November 21, 1994, by William J. Broad. The original *Times* story was picked up by the *Memphis Commercial Appeal*, the *Santa Cruz Sentinel*, and the *Greenwire* on 11/21/95.

On November 22, the *Minneapolis Star Tribune* editorialized, "If there is a silver lining in the horrifying disclosure of irresponsible underground radioactive waste disposal in Russia, it is that the world now knows at least something about what happened. When the Cold War was hot, much information—that Russian nuclear installations pumped billions of gallons of radioactive waste into underground rock formations—remained the deepest state secret."

Most interestingly, and not covered elsewhere, the *Star Tribune* revealed that the nuclear engineers at Hanford, Washington, and Oak Ridge, Tennessee, experimented with subsurface disposal also, although on a much smaller scale and at lower concentrations than that of the Russian scientists.

A news database search indicated there were no follow-up stories on these revelations throughout 1995.

However, by the end of the year, there were indications that Russia was making some attempts to deal with its radioactive waste problem. On December 19, 1995, the *Greenwire* reported that Russia and Norway signed an agreement on December 15 to work together on nuclear waste disposal, including spent nuclear fuel dumped by Russia; on December 31, Reuters reported a joint venture by Japan and the United States to build a radioactive liquid waste storage and reprocessing plant in Russia.

William J. Broad, author of the original article in *The New York Times*, declined to respond to our questionnaire attempting to follow-up on his story.

8 **CENSORED**

Medical Fraud Costs the Nation \$100 Billion Annually— Or More

Source:

MOTHER JONES

Date: March/April 1995

Title: "Medscam"

Author: L.J. Davis

SYNOPSIS: The United States' \$1 trillion annual health bill is 14 per-

cent of the gross domestic product, making the medical industry the largest business in the land.

Of this sum, a staggering amount is stolen. According to the National Health Care Anti-Fraud Association, the yearly swag totals between \$31-\$53 billion; according to the authoritative General Accounting Office, the annual take is \$100 billion; according to other investigators the amount is as high as \$250 billion. In fact, an extensive *Mother Jones* investigation discovered that no one really knows how much money is stolen from the medical system every year—and, possibly even worse, no one has any way of finding out.

Although Medicare and Medicaid were created in 1965, no specialized police force was established until 1978, giving the bad guys, according to Bill Whatley Jr., president of the National Association of Medicaid Fraud Control Units, "a 13-year head start, and we never caught up. The people who put this program together didn't believe that the [health care providers] in the program would commit fraud, because medicine was such a high calling."

Unfortunately, such optimism was misplaced; it did not take health care providers long before they developed a series of medscam techniques including the following:

Upcoding: a doctor performs one medical procedure and charges the

insurer for another (more profitable) one;

Unbundling: the whole is sometimes worth less than the sum of its parts. A wheelchair broken down into its components—a wheel here, a seat there—with a separate bill for each, can mean bigger profits;

Pharmacy Fraud: a corrupt pharmacist, often abetted by a physician and a patient, dispenses a generic drug rather than a brand-name drug and pockets the difference;

Psychiatric Schemes: in the 1980s, the nation experienced an "epidemic" of clinical depression, as hospital chains filled their beds with teenagers, the overweight, and substance abusers;

Home Health Care: this includes overbilling, billing for services not rendered, kickbacks, the use of untrained (i.e. inexpensive) personnel, and the delivery of unnecessary equipment;

Ghost Patients: there are doctors who continue to treat patients after they're dead and doctors who work more than 24 hours a day.

Social Security is another area rife with fraud, costing billions of dollars. The Social Security Administration (SSA) runs a \$1.4 billion program that pays drunks and junkies to remain drunks and junkies. As long as the substance abusers continue to abuse substances, they receive a federal payday every month; if they go straight, the checks stop. In a