



“Unless we put medical freedom into the Constitution, the time will come when medicine will organize into an undercover dictatorship to restrict the art of healing to one class of men and deny equal privileges to others; the Constitution of the Republic should make a special privilege for medical freedoms as well as religious freedom.”

~Dr. Benjamin Rush, Declaration of Independence signer

Integrative Medicine = Medical Freedom

by Rick Wasserman, CSA

The United States of America is still arguably the best country in the world to live in, based upon the wisdom of the constitution and the innate desire of our people to live as a free society. Ultimately, the will of the people has prevailed throughout our history, and the ideals written into our constitution have earned us a place as a model of freedom and justice for the rest of the world. Americans have been tested many times, and despite countless setbacks, and even some failures, the people eventually rise to the occasion to save our civilization and correct any path that may have led to our demise.

The USA is not leading the world in the field of health-care right now, however, as many other nations provide their citizens with greater alternatives than we do. Western medicine, as it is currently practiced in the United States, has many positive attributes, but it is not the only treatment modality that offers quality medical care. Americans are once again facing an opportunity to remove the yoke of intolerance; this time in the area of medicine. Medical freedom is as important as any other issue facing people today, including terrorism and corporate corruption. Who among us doesn't have a family member or loved one with a chronic, disabling disease, or is afflicted with one themselves?

Dr. Benjamin Rush, a signer of the Declaration of Independence and personal physician to George Washington said: “Unless we put medical freedom into the Constitution, the time will come when medicine will organize into an undercover dictatorship to restrict the art of healing to one class of men and deny equal privileges to others; the Constitution of the Republic should make a special privilege for medical freedoms as well as religious freedom.” While it is tragic that

this prophetic warning was not heeded two centuries ago, it is not too late. Too often, we must be driven to the precipice before we take decisive action; the time is near and integrative medicine is the solution.

There are nontoxic therapies available right now that work better to treat many chronic conditions than those offered by the pharmaceutically based conventional practice paradigm. They involve quality nutrition, exercise, traditional and ancient therapies, often called “alternative” or “complementary.” The truth is these treatments may better be considered “integrative medicine,” an integral part of overall medical care within conventional Western medicine. There are many patients who have been treated with integrative modalities who have recovered and are thriving today, which indicates that not all so-called “alternative” therapies are antagonistic to conventional medicine. The truth is they often work well together, and when used in tandem, produce even better results. Still, many health care practitioners can be completely competent but still not address their patients' best interests, and this includes licensed medical doctors. Patients have the right to decide what kinds of therapies they receive, and to receive fully informed consent of any treatment suggested, be it conventional or alternative, as a safeguard. The truth is many patients are never offered alternatives at all. This is tragic if one considers how many less invasive, safer and lower-cost modalities exist that could be offered first, and the more invasive and riskier treatments presented as a last resort only when gentler methods have proven ineffective.

Integrative medicine as a standard approach to treatment is inevitable, and one that will combine the best practices

of all modalities. Ineffective treatments and useless testing will surrender to a higher standard of practice that will treat the patient in his or her entirety, rather than trying to patch an illness with mono-strategic remedies that may or may not work. Integrative medicine is oriented toward treating the whole patient, not just the disease. It treats the underlying cause of symptoms, utilizing the mind/body connection that is too often ignored in Western medicine, which commonly results in significant complications and reduced efficacy.

Wellness is the first line of defense for preventing disease, yet our current standard is "if it's not broken, don't fix it." Imagine what would happen to our cars and appliances if we applied that principle to them! Most people rarely visit a doctor, and when they do it is because they are sick. Try

that on your four wheeled friend in the garage. Would you pour waste oil into a fuel tank? Why not? It's a lot cheaper than good quality gas and oil. Think about the fast food many of us eat. For humans, fast food is the equivalent of chemical waste, yet we wonder why heart disease and cancer is so prevalent in our society. Many illnesses can be avoided simply by choosing a healthy lifestyle and maintaining our bodies. This includes what we eat, how and what we breathe, and what physical activities we engage in. It also includes

regular visits to healthcare professionals for maintenance, even when we feel perfectly fine.

An awareness is finally emerging regarding the need for greater knowledge of natural remedies which are beneficial, as well as the need to understand which conventional practices are extreme, costly and ineffective. I believe that America will rise to the challenge and once again lead the world in ethical and effective healthcare. Much of this is in your hands; the tools are available, the need is critical, and the will of the people can make it happen.

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