

WHITE HOUSE COMMISSION ON COMPLEMENTARY AND ALTERNATIVE MEDICINE POLICY: A MEMBERSHIP DIRECTORY

Timothy Gorski

The editor of the Scientific Review of Alternative Medicine has been in frequent contact with the executive secretary of the White House Commission, Stephen Groft, PharmD. The commission's schedule was distributed initially to what it perceived to be interested parties—most of the advocacy organizations for various anomalous theories and methods (“‘alternative’ medicine”). No organization representing rational approaches to anomalous medicine was notified—despite these organizations and their leaders being well-known to the commission officers. The commission's formation and purpose was discovered serendipitously, whereupon we initiated contact, asking for full information and opportunity to testify. The commission cooperated by publicizing its schedule, but we were initially offered only a 10-minute space at one meeting. We felt that to be exclusive and inadequate.

Once we had the opportunity to review the makeup of the commission, we recognized that presenting information before them would be wasted effort. We knew well that the members already knew how they were regarded and what scientists and rational physicians know about the methods—that they are ineffective and that claims for them are false.

In place of speaking in 5- and 10-minute spots along with scores of advocates and before unqualified commission members at each of 8 “town meetings,” we proposed a 2- to 3-day conference to present our information disproving most aberrant claims. The conference would be presented to a neutral panel from the National Academy of Sciences and the report

published and distributed appropriately along with the commission report. Our proposal was rejected.

In later correspondence, the executive director informed us in 2001 that Sen Tom Harkin (D-Iowa) wanted to hear from “opposing views.” We would be brought to DC and allowed 10 minutes for several speakers. We found this unacceptable, and accepting the offer would negate the request for a full conference. Most of us agreed not to cooperate with what amounted to a restricted minishow of opinion, which would be window dressing to satisfy the appearance that the commission had “heard from both sides.” Unfortunately, some of our colleagues accepted invitations under those conditions—though most were unaware of our ongoing negotiations.

The charges to the commission from the president were obviously fashioned for maximum political success. They include finding ways to investigate unproven and aberrant methods, educate professionals and the public in their methods, and integrate the methods into practice and the medical system. There is no reference to evaluating the methods for validity or of even investigating any method's validity. This was another reason not to speak before the commission on its terms: The commission is prevented by presidential directive from considering the issue of validity.

The list of members and their associations reveals characteristics that will disqualify the commission's findings before medical scientists but, unfortunately, that is not the case with the public or the press. First, almost all members represent ideological, unproven, and disproved methods. Only 3 members have qualifying scientific or academic backgrounds, and they have displayed sympathetic attitudes toward the “alternative” medicine movement. Thus, the commission has no semblance of objectivity or balance.

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Second, the vast majority of members stand to benefit professionally and economically from the implementation of their recommendations. Thus, conflict of interest is both apparent and real.

Third, we wondered what was the commission's real purpose. The Office of Alternative Medicine/National Center for Complementary and Alternative Medicine (OAM/NCCAM), formed in 1992, was succeeding in promoting the ideas of "alternative" medicine acceptance, and Congress was appropriating increasing amounts annually to a surprising nearly \$100 million per year. "Alternative" medicine was hardly in need of more boosting.

We tried to obtain the history of why and how the commission was formed. No one involved was willing to reveal the nomination and selection processes, which we now assume was a "star chamber" procedure, made out of public view—certainly conflicting with the democratic process. The request was said to have come officially from the former secretary of Health and Human Services (HHS), now at the University of Florida. A request to her for information sent by registered mail went unanswered. Further questioning revealed that the liaison of HHS to the White House, and the person who knew about the process, was Stephen Ottenstein. Calls and letters to him went unanswered. His whereabouts since the change in administration are unknown.

We then obtained material on this affair through the Freedom of Information Act and found a previous executive director, but she would not give any information at all.

We now print the following information for the medical and health professions, and all other interested parties, in order that the report of this commission can be placed in perspective.—Eds.

ON MARCH 7, 2000, PRESIDENT CLINTON announced the creation of a White House Commission on Complementary and Alternative Medicine Policy (WHCCAMP). Executive Order 13147 called for a commission of no more than 15 members who "shall provide a report, through the Secretary of Health and Human Services, to the President on legislative and administrative recommendations for assuring that public policy maximizes the benefits to Americans of complementary and alternative medicine." Mr Clinton subsequently appointed a chairman and 13 other members of the commission and, on September 15, 2000, amended the original order to allow up to 20 members. The commission's report is due in March 2002. Observers expect that it will recommend increased federal and other spending on methods based on ideological rather than scientific principles. The commission is also

expected to emphasize educating professionals and the public in perceived benefits of aberrant, ineffective methods.

JAMES S. GORDON, MD, CHAIRMAN

The WHCCAMP chair is James S. Gordon, MD, a Georgetown University psychiatrist. He has said that when he began studying traditional Chinese medicine in the 1960s he found "a whole other system of medicine operating under completely different laws." Then, while receiving his training in psychiatry, he decided that schizophrenia and other disorders "did not seem like diseases to me [but] instead like different ways of being." It was at this time that he became a student of the radical British psychiatrist R. D. Laing. Laing's "Insanity Is Sanity" philosophy achieved great popularity in the 1960s drug counterculture.¹ Dr Gordon appears to have become enamored of these ideas at the time that Laing's London "therapeutic community," Kingsley Hall, involved the mentally ill and their therapists living together. Among other activities, the community indulged in LSD, and was forced to close under a cloud of scandal and public complaint.^{2(pp79-92)} Laing's thinking became distorted by long-term LSD use.^{2(pp51-61)} He went on to become involved in "Primal Scream" and "rebirthing" psychodrama^{2(pp125-131)} of the kind that killed a young girl in Colorado in May of 2000 and sent 2 therapists to jail.*

Dr Gordon then became a follower of the late Bhagwan Shree Rajneesh, the Indian mystic who amassed wealth and influence enough to take over the small town of Antelope, Oregon, in the 1980s before being deported by U.S. authorities for fraud. Dr Gordon wrote a sympathetic book about the cult, *The Golden Guru*, in which he offered excuses for the Bhagwan's erratic behavior and the violence connected with the cult. Dr Gordon also describes his own "rebirthing" experience at the hands of one of the Bhagwan's therapists.[†] In 1997 some followers

*Articles on this rebirthing death are available at: denver.rockymountainnews.com/candace.

†Gordon JS. *The Golden Guru*. Lexington, Mass: Stephen Greene Press; 1987. Notable passages from *The Golden Guru*:

- (a) Dr Gordon describes his own "rebirthing" in chapter 3, "Surrender to Bhagwan," pp. 86-89. At the hands of a naked female therapist, Dr Gordon recounted "a replay of my descent through the birth canal" leaving him "flailing on the mat, squalling like a newborn," feeling "gratitude and love, not so general now as in groups, but focused on Rajneesh, on his generosity."
- (b) On pages 84-86 Dr Gordon defends the use of violent psychotherapies short of killing, which did happen at Ra-

of the Bhagwan cult were involved in deliberate poisonings of hundreds of people in Oregon.³

In recent years, Dr Gordon has been a collaborator of parapsychologists and Jungian ideologues within the Transpersonal Psychology movement.* He has also become an advocate for alien-abduction therapy and research, in which stories of abductions and molestations are regarded as valid experiences. He serves on the Scientific Advisory Board of the Program for Extraordinary Experience Research (PEER), an organization established by Harvard psychiatrist John Mack, MD, explicitly to research alien abductions.⁴

Dr Gordon gratuitously involved himself in the Oklahoma bombing trial of Terry Nichols. As a psychiatrist for the defense, he submitted a letter to the court stating that Nichols was not violent and should not receive a

long prison term. Dr Gordon's opinion was apparently based entirely on letters he received from Nichols.^{5,6}

Dr Gordon is a fellow of the John E. Fetzer Institute, which funded the erroneous 1993 report published in the *New England Journal of Medicine* by David Eisenberg and others. The report became the linchpin evidence for advancing "alternative" research and practice in the United States. The author claimed that a third of Americans were using "alternative" methods by including such categories as relaxation, imagery, massage, commercial weight-loss groups, and self-help groups; including these methods bloated the findings. Such methods were not previously considered "unconventional," but merely adjunctive lifestyle methods, many long accepted in medicine and health. Eisenberg's own data showed only 10% of those interviewed had seen a practitioner, not the 34% popularly quoted.

One of Gordon's many books, *Manifesto for A New Medicine*, is in the genre of the Aquarian Age, predicting the transformation of medical care along New Age lines.

In 1994 Dr Gordon was appointed the first chairman of the Office of Alternative Medicine's (OAM) Program Advisory Council and was a codirector of OAM's Mind-Body Panel. His Center for Mind-Body Medicine has also been funded by the Fetzer Institute, the \$350-million-plus institute devoted to incorporating unproven mind/body practices into medicine that also funds the Eisenberg department and courses at Harvard. Dr Gordon has organized a series of annual Comprehensive Cancer Care conferences that have gathered together dozens of proponent practitioners as an effective lobbying force for unproved and aberrant cancer methods.[†]

Dr Gordon has previous experience as a presidential advisor, having in the 1970s directed a nationwide study of "alternative" mental health services for President Carter's Commission on Mental Health. In his 1978 report, in addition to noncontroversial mental health programs such as rape support and runaway programs, Gordon recommended the practices of "The Farm," then a psychedelic commune. R. D. Laing is directly quoted referring to schizophrenia as "a voyage into self of a potentially revolutionary nature." Dr Gordon has not published any reassessment of Laing or of Laing's influence on him. He also offered praise for the then budding holistic medicine industry.⁷

jneesh's commune in India. He writes that he is "not against fighting in groups" and that Rajneesh's followers "believed that the violent confrontations—even their own bad bruises and broken limbs—had been a small and necessary price to pay for the freedom they now felt from past traumas and inhibitions, for the perspective they had gained on their own sadism and masochism."

- (c) On page 114 Dr Gordon defends Rajneesh's collection of 93 Rolls-Royces at the Oregon commune. "In displaying his wealth so conspicuously, in ignoring accusations of selfishness," writes Dr Gordon, "Rajneesh was mocking the preconceptions of his New World audience, who—particularly the Christians—tended to associate spirituality with poverty, modesty, charity."
- (d) On page 148 Dr Gordon defends Rajneesh's recruitment and exploitation of the homeless and mentally ill, saying that the guru's "program, in spite of its inequities and exploitativeness, does seem a great improvement over what these men have been offered in city and state mental hospitals and shelters. Those who stay are functioning, useful members of a loving community. They seem to have a real opportunity to change."
- (e) In his concluding paragraphs on page 245 Dr Gordon writes of Rajneesh's "vision of a loving, cooperative community dedicated to the creation of new men and women living in harmony with their own nature and the natural world. . . . For me, it is not finally a question of agreeing or disagreeing with Rajneesh, of praising or condemning him or his sannyasins. It is, rather, a matter of learning from him and them, of appreciating his remarkable talents and gifts and recognizing his perverse uses of them, of seeing myself in him and his sannyasins, of using his extraordinary story and strange, as yet unfinished journey as a mirror for my own."

*He is listed as a plenary speaker at a 1999 "Life After Death" conference of parapsychologists and mystics at www.pathwaysminneapolis.org/lifedeath.html. He has also appeared at conferences of followers of the noted "orgone energy" pseudopsychologist Wilhelm Reich (members.aol.com/mannionabc/) and has advocated that resources be devoted to researching "orgone accumulators."

†The Quackwatch Web site lists Gordon's book on these conferences, *Comprehensive Cancer Care* (James S. Gordon, MD, and Sharon Curtin, 2000) on its list of nonrecommended cancer information books at www.quackwatch.com/00AboutQuackwatch/altseek.html

WAYNE M. JONAS, MD

Dr Jonas is former director of the NIH Office of Alternative Medicine (OAM), the predecessor of the National Center for Complementary and Alternative Medicine (NCCAM). Dr Jonas started at the OAM in July of 1995, almost a year after the departure of its first director, Joseph Jacobs, MD. Dr Jacobs left the OAM after objecting to “naive” and “professionally insulting” directives issued by Sen Tom Harkin (D-Iowa), widely acknowledged as being responsible for the OAM. Dr Jacobs was particularly upset by Senator Harkin’s insistence that 4 advocates of irrational and aberrant practices be placed on the OAM’s advisory panel.⁸

Dr Jonas is a homeopath, a believer in a discredited 18th-century mystical, prescientific theory of medicine that asserts the truth of “laws” invented or adapted from ancient concepts. One of these, the “law of similars,” from which homeopathy takes its name, asserts that substances that cause certain symptoms are effective in treating those same symptoms. Another, the “law of infinitesimals,” states that diluting a substance makes it more potent. Homeopathy consists of substances diluted to infinitesimal dilutions, to the point where no molecules of the substance are likely to remain.

Dr Jonas became enamored of homeopathy as a medical student at the Bowman Gray School of Medicine in North Carolina. After he suggested that a patient with pneumonia be treated with homeopathy, his supervisors asked him to repeat his rotation in medicine. Dr Jonas’s belief systems followed him through adulthood. As OAM director he told an interviewer, “Just as the discovery of infectious agents revolutionized our ability to care for many diseases at the turn of the century, the discovery of what happens when a homeopathic preparation is made and how it impacts the body might revolutionize our understanding of chemistry, biology and medicine.”⁹

During Dr Jonas’s time at the OAM, “remote viewer” Marilyn Schlitz, PhD, was brought onto its Scientific Advisory Board and has remained there under the new NCCAM structure. Dr Schlitz recently received an NCCAM grant to study extrasensory perception with fellow psychic Leanna Standish, who is research director at the Bastyr School of Naturopathic Medicine, one of the NCCAM’s research centers.

Dr Jonas coauthored a book on homeopathy in which he makes it clear that he is certain of its effectiveness but is only doubtful about its mechanism. The pattern of nonexistent molecules “must be stored in some way in the diluted water/alcohol mixture.” He sug-

gests that occult energies, imaginary “biophotons,” or New Age quantum effects could be involved.¹⁰

Dr Jonas has become frustrated with homeopathy research, perhaps because of the obvious truth in one medical scientist’s observation that such research is nothing more than “a game of chance between two placebos.”¹¹ Dr Jonas has suggested that validating homeopathy “may require a theory that incorporates subjective variables,”¹² which is to say, how the thoughts of patients, doctors, and perhaps their next-door neighbors might influence the effects of a homeopathic remedy. This is in line with belief in psychic powers.

It is also consistent with Dr Jonas’s involvement, while he was OAM director, in the allocation of \$1.4 million to the work of Nicholas Gonzalez, MD, who uses coffee enemas and psychic hair analysis in treating cancer. Barrie Cassileth, PhD, chief of the Integrative Medicine Service at Sloan-Kettering Cancer Center, called Gonzalez’s claims and methods “voodoo magic . . . silly . . . not scientific. Worse than not scientific. This is pure ridiculousness.”¹³ The son of one of Gonzalez’s patients described how his mother died:

“She spent countless, countless hours every day in the solitude of her room, taking pills, doing enemas,” recalls Josh, Reickert’s son. As their mother grew sicker, say Reickert’s children, she spent up to eight hours a day on the enema process.¹³

But as late as 1998, after Dr Gonzalez had been found guilty of medical malpractice and ordered to pay more than \$2 million while a similar case was pending,¹⁴ Dr Jonas, at a meeting of the Cancer Advisory Panel of the NCCAM, defended Gonzalez’s methods. The meeting’s minutes state:

[Research on the methods of Nicholas Gonzalez’s methods is] a study of the effectiveness of a unique practitioner and how his personal involvement in patient treatment may affect the trial outcomes. Dr Jonas agreed that this study will present an opportunity to determine if one practitioner’s successful treatment protocol can be generalized and used by other practitioners with equal success, which will necessitate careful record-keeping by the participating practitioners in order to track exactly what care is being delivered within the treatment protocol.¹⁵

Here, Dr Jonas assumed the results were valid and considered it possible that Dr Gonzalez’s methods could not be “generalized and used by other practitioners with equal success.” But rather than conclude, if this were

the case, that Gonzalez's reports are erroneous or false, and the methods are worthless, Dr Jonas is ready to assume that Dr Gonzalez's "successful treatment protocol" must have to do with something uniquely connected with the person of Dr Gonzalez. This is the "intentionality" claim that the subjective mental state of the practitioner or others materially affects the outcome of a medical intervention.

This also fits with Dr Jonas's new position on the Scientific Advisory Committee of the paranormalism-oriented Institute for Noetic Sciences (IONS). According to IONS, Dr Jonas "envisions the development of protocols using gene-array procedures to examine possible genetic expression arising from CAM signals in distant healing." He considers it wrong and obsolete that "the current view of the body is grounded in molecular biology." He prefers that "bodily parts [can] communicate over long distances almost instantaneously" by means of "non-local characteristics in the biological process, with widely separated parts interacting in ways that don't have obvious physical carriers."¹⁶

In June of 2001 Dr Jonas was on the program committee of a conference in San Diego touting the reality of UFOs, paranormalism, qigong, orgone energy, and other pseudoscientific claims.¹⁷ His preoccupation with aberrant methods appears to be ideological if not religious. At one of the hearings of the WHCCAMP he stated: ". . . a number of groups are now getting into this field from the orthodox community, because there has been some money available. How can we go about sorting through which ones are truly going to capture the spirit of whole person health or how many are looking really at the bottom line, which is getting redder and redder by the year?"¹⁸

GEORGE M. BERNIER, JR, MD

Dr Bernier is the only prominent academic on the WHCCAMP. He is the former dean of medicine at the University of Pittsburgh, leaving that position in 1995 to accept the positions of dean and vice president for academic affairs at the University of Texas Medical Branch (UTMB) in Galveston, Texas. He currently is the vice president of education at UTMB.

Since his arrival there, UTMB's program in alternative and integrative health care has blossomed, offering mystical and paranormal healing techniques, including Therapeutic Touch (TT). It recommends to the public the mystical writings of Deepak Chopra, Larry Dossey, and Carolyn Myss, and Andrew Weil.¹⁹ The program is

directed by Victor S. Sierpina, MD, a nationally prominent CAM activist²⁰ and includes a faculty member, Mary Anne Hanley, RN, who is a former student of Theosophist mystic Dolores Krieger, the founder of TT.²¹ Krieger's most recent exploits include "distant healing" on those who were killed in the September 11 attacks on the United States."²²

Dr Bernier was instrumental in establishing a "Spirituality in Clinical Care" course of study for medical and nursing students funded by the National Institute for Healthcare Research (NIHR), an evangelical Christian group associated with the John Templeton Foundation.²³ The course bibliography features not only the writings of NIHR head David B. Larson, but also *Healing Words* by Larry Dossey, MD,²⁴ in which it is claimed that paranormal effects have been demonstrated on bacteria, sweetpeas, and mice, as well as humans.

EFFIE POY YEW CHOW, PHD

Effie Poy Yew Chow is an acupuncturist, "Qigong Grandmaster" and founder of the East West Academy of Healing Arts in San Francisco.²⁵ Her PhD is in education. She has connections with the NCCAM going back to the OAM, when she was appointed to its first Ad Hoc Advisory Committee.²⁶

Qi is the traditional Chinese counterpart to psychic "life energy," the flow of which is said to be modified by acupuncture and which advocates claim can be "absorbed" and "emitted." Chow claims to cure illness and boost the psychic powers of individuals by transmitting qi to them by telephone.²⁷ She employs typical stage magic tricks to show the existence of qi energy.

At the commission's September 8, 2000, meeting in San Francisco, she said that "what we're here for" is "recommending policies to making a big change in the system."²⁸ Transcripts of the commission's work show that she has a long relationship with fellow commissioner David Bresler and with its chair, Dr Gordon.²⁹

DAVID BRESLER, PHD

Dr Bresler, like Dr Chow, is an acupuncturist and not a physician. He is credited by the White House with being "one of the first contemporary American scientists to study and research acupuncture, guided imagery, and other mind/body approaches." But the only 2 published clinical trials listed on PUBMED of which he is a coauthor involve acupuncture, one of which showed no ben-

efit in asthma. Another article purported to show scientifically that the whole human body is mapped out on the ear.³⁰

Guided imagery is based on almost as fanciful a notion, namely, that imagining physical changes in the body can effect those changes. Thus, cancer patients are taught to imagine their tumors being destroyed. Yet there is no published evidence in support of guided imagery affording more than psychological benefits for any condition, or that such effects are superior to those offered by other interventions. Nevertheless, Dr Bresler founded the Academy for Guided Imagery (AGI) in 1989.³¹ The AGI now sells 150-hour certification-training programs at \$3495 each. Among other things, such training involves “dialoguing with symptoms.” Another practice is to call up an “inner advisor,” a kind of spirit guide that may take the form of an animal.

The AGI promotes audio tapes to the general public. “Arthritis and Lupus,” for example, is “[d]esigned to help reduce rheumatoid joint inflammation, soreness, excess fluid; replace eroded bone and joint tissue; [and] help calm overactive, misguided immune cells.” Another, for diabetic patients, is “[d]esigned to encourage insulin sensitivity at the cellular level; help the body metabolize food in a steady, balanced way; [and] help repair damage to organs and tissue.” Still another, for victims of atherosclerosis, is alleged “to help the body restore weary heart tissue; improve cholesterol and blood pressure; dissolve arterial plaque; [and] maintain healthy arteries.” There is no evidence that the AGI’s tapes exert such effects.

The AGI also runs conferences that feature advocates of unproven and irrational methods. These have included Andrew Weil, Jungian advocate Jeanne Achterberg, Larry Dossey, Joan Borysenko, O. Carl Simonton, Jungian “LSD therapist” Stanislav Grof, and Dean Ornish, among others.

Dr Bresler believes an Iranian faith healer, Ostad Hadi Parvarandeh, who claimed to be in touch with the “collective consciousness” of the universe. Dr Bresler wrote, “Ostad, I have been quite amazed by the progress shown by several of my patients who have seen you, and feel that it is time to launch some serious scientific studies to carefully document whatever is happening.”³²

XIAO MING TIAN, MD

Dr Xiao Ming Tian is a Beijing-trained physician-acupuncturist who runs the Academy of Acupuncture and Chinese Medicine at his Wildwood Acupuncture Center

in Bethesda. There he offers acupuncture, acupressure, Chinese herbal remedies, and qigong “treatments.”³³

Dr Tian has been a consultant to the NIH and was involved in producing the NIH Consensus Statement on Acupuncture that excluded critics of the method. The biographical information on Tian released by the White House indicates that he received government funding for “many research projects on the use of Chinese herbal medicine and dietary supplements.” None appears to have resulted in published work available by search on PUBMED. According to the White House press release, Tian is also “President of the American Association of Chinese Medicine,” as well as “Honorary Director of the China Association of Traditional Chinese Medicine and Vice President of The International Academy of Medical Qigong, both in Beijing, China.”³⁴

VERONICA GUTIERREZ, DC

Veronica Gutierrez is a chiropractor from Lake Stevens, Washington. She is active in the World Chiropractic Alliance (WCA), sitting on its board of directors, serving as its director of programs in public policy, and chairing its Health Care Reform Committee and its Council on Women’s Health.³⁵

The WCA is an organization of “straight” chiropractors whose allegiance is to the original doctrine of disease causation taught by chiropractic’s founder, D. D. Palmer, that spinal “subluxations” interfere with the “flow” of supernatural “innate intelligence” and can only be corrected by chiropractic “adjustments.”

The WCA promotes chiropractic as the ideal form of medical care for infants and children as well as for adults. It opposes routine immunizations³⁶ while dismissing medical science as good only for “trauma care and crisis management.” Ms Gutierrez states, “If anyone still believes medical science reigns supreme, they now must say ‘The Emperor wears no clothes.’”³⁷

Ms Gutierrez is also connected with the Council for Chiropractic Practice (CCP). The CCP advocates home births, chiropractic manipulation of infants for the prevention of SIDS and of children for pediatric ear infections, and lifelong “adjustments” for an alleged epidemic of “subluxations” for everyone. The CCP also claims that EEGs, surface EMGs, and thermography, as well as other unproven methods, can demonstrate chiropractic “subluxations.”³⁸

Ms Gutierrez’s presence on the commission is the result of lobbying by the WCA,³⁹ which boasts of growing political influence and maintains a presence in Wash-

ington, DC, for the purpose of exerting political influence.⁴⁰ Indeed, immediately upon Ms Gutierrez's appointment to the commission, the WCA began mobilizing its members to testify at WHCCAMP meetings.⁴¹

DONALD W. WARREN, DDS

Dr Warren is a dentist from Clinton, Arkansas, who treats temporomandibular joint dysfunction and other ailments with "dental cranial osteopathy." In addition, he practices "contact reflex analysis," which is claimed to be a method of "analyzing the body's structural, physical, and nutritional needs." This is done by pressing on various mystical points on the body while pushing and pulling on the patient's arm (or other body part). Alterations in muscle strength—the "reflexes"—are claimed to "quickly and accurately uncover the root" of any health problem.

Details concerning this irrational method, including the locations of the "Master Allergy Reflexes," the "Metabolic Reflex," the "Yeast Reflex," the "Hemoglobin Reflex," and additional "reflexes" especially relevant for the flu season, can be found at www.crahealth.org (click on "CRA and Syndromes"). On this same Web site can be found Dr Warren's lengthy statement of enthusiastic belief in CRA as well as the healing powers of "God, chiropractic, CRA-based nutrition, dentistry and osteopathy."⁴²

Dr Warren's personal convictions concerning this application are forthright: "In my 16 years of practicing as a dentist, I have never known any method of analysis, technique, treatment or nutritional presentation so helpful, so exact, so satisfying, and have such a high level of quality as Contact Reflex Analysis."⁴³

LINNEA S. LARSON

Ms Larson is a social worker who is associate director of an "integrative medicine" department of West Suburban Health Care in Oak Park, Illinois. She also practices Eye Movement Desensitization and Reprocessing (EMDR) and other aberrant forms of "mind-body" therapy.⁴⁴ Serious problems exist with respect to EMDR and its lack of validation.⁴⁵

Ms Larson was among the faculty listed at a program in Santa Fe in October of 2000 entitled "Integrating Culture and Complementary Medicine: Challenges to the Biomedical Paradigm."⁴⁶ This conference assailed the scientific biopsychosocial model of medicine from the perspective of postmodern cultural rela-

tivism. Another notable speaker was Victor Sierpina, MD, the head of the University of Texas Medical Branch's alternative medicine program, which has been nurtured by fellow commissioner Dr George Bernier.

JOSEPH E. PIZZORNO, JR

Joseph E. Pizzorno, Jr, is an "ND"—doctor of naturopathy—a naturopathic midwife, and the founding president of Bastyr University, a naturopathic school that was chosen by the NCCAM to be a Center for Alternative Medicine Research. Besides promoting practices connected with the prescientific philosophy of naturopathy, Bastyr is engaged in paranormal research for which it recently received NCCAM grant monies to study extrasensory perception and "distant healing" of HIV/AIDS by psychic means.⁴⁷ Mr Pizzorno now acts as an advisor to the school.

Mr Pizzorno is on the management team of the Dove Health Alliance,⁴⁸ the mission of which is "to discover, validate, and disseminate the principles and practices of energy medicine on personal, societal and environmental levels."⁴⁹

Mr Pizzorno asserts that "the hypothesis that gluten is a causative factor in the development of schizophrenia is substantiated by epidemiological, clinical and experimental studies."⁵⁰ He believes that food allergies cause multiple sclerosis.⁵¹ He says the dandelion is useful for the "sluggish, congested, toxic liver."⁵² He promotes kava for "stress."⁵³ And, like Deepak Chopra, he is a proponent of the herbal practice of Ayurveda.⁵⁴

Mr Pizzorno also believes in the "blood type diet" advocated by fellow naturopath Peter D'Adamo, a Bastyr graduate. Pizzorno calls it "the medical breakthrough for the ages," saying that it will change the practice of medicine for centuries to come and lauds D'Adamo as "an outstanding example of the best Bastyr has to offer."⁵⁵

JOSEPH J. FINS, MD

Dr Fins is director of medical ethics at the Cornell campus of New York Presbyterian Hospital and holds academic positions at the Weill Medical College of Cornell University. He appears to be 1 of only 3 commission members without a clearly established reputation as an ideological advocate for irrational claims and practices. His primary interests to date have been in palliative and hospice care for the dying.⁵⁶

However, in his comments during meetings of the

commission, Dr Fins has said that he was “really struck by this notion of ancestral medicine.” He also seems unaware of the fact that concern for the family and spiritual dimensions of patients is well within the model of scientific medicine when he spoke of the “failings of allopathic medical education.”⁵⁷

GEORGE T. DEVRIES III

Mr DeVries runs at least three different companies. American Specialty Health and Wellness sells supplements over the Internet. American Specialty Health Plans⁵⁸ and American Specialty Networks “provide chiropractic and acupuncture managed-care services.” The former is a primary financial sponsor of “alternative” medicine courses of Harvard and Stanford Universities. *Acupuncture Today* calls him the “president of one of the largest acupuncture HMOs in the nation.”⁵⁹ DeVries’s efforts seem to be devoted primarily to getting employers and insurance companies, and, it would now appear, taxpayers, to pay for unproven methods.

CHARLOTTE ROSE KERR

Sr Charlotte Rose Kerr is an acupuncturist who is said to “integrate” theology into her methods. This might be assumed to be Catholicism, but she has taught and practiced at the Tai Sophia Institute in Columbia, Maryland, at which qigong, homeopathy, food supplementation, shiatzu, and “zero balancing” are offered, since 1977.⁶⁰ Links from the Tai Sophia Web site include IONS, the Esalen Institute, and the Omega Institute for Holistic Studies, another New Age organization. An announcement praising Sister Kerr’s appointment to the commission is posted on the Tai Sophia Web site⁶¹ in which it is stated that “Dr. James S. Gordon, Director of the Center for Mind/Body Medicine in Washington, D.C., [is] a long-time friend of the Tai Sophia Institute.”

At the commission’s Draft Interim Report meeting on July 3, 2001, Sister Kerr said, “. . . we believe the body/mind has the right and power to heal itself. . . . we believe health is more than the absence of disease. It is the active integration of spiritual, emotional, social, physical, and I personally included ecological self. . . . healing is being in right relationship with self, others, community and the cosmos.”⁶²

TIERAONA LOW DOG, MD

Dr Low Dog practices “herbal medicine” in New Mexico and offers a \$1500 correspondence course. She advocates the use of herbs for a wide variety of serious illnesses affecting all major organ systems as well as for childbirth and breast-feeding. Prospective students are assured that they will have “a thorough working knowledge” of how to practice medicine using herbal products upon completing the instruction.⁶³ Dr Low Dog endorses black cohosh for the treatment of menopause and echinacea for colds. She advises many herbal and “alternative” medicine organizations and publications. She is on the faculty of the Rosenthal Center at Columbia University directed by Fredi Kronenberg, PhD.

DEAN ORNISH, MD

Dr Ornish earned his reputation with his work on the management of atherosclerosis with extremely low-fat vegetarian diets. But like those of predecessor Nathan Pritikin, Dr Ornish’s recommendations are not suitable for most people. Dr Frank Sacks, a nutrition professor at Harvard Medical School and the Harvard School of Public Health, in trying to replicate Dr Ornish’s results with a grant from the NIH, found that it was difficult to recruit patients and few could stick with the program.⁶⁴

The few small studies claimed to prove the worth of his work have also been questioned on scientific grounds. Dr Richard Pasternak, director of preventive cardiology at the Massachusetts General Hospital in Boston, said, “There’s virtually no science” in them.⁶⁴ Dr Robert Eckel, professor of medicine at the University of Colorado Health Sciences Center in Denver and chairman of the nutrition committee of the American Heart Association, also expressed serious doubts. Dr Ornish’s program has been superseded by more effective forms of managing elevated blood cholesterol and the discovery of other treatable risk factors.

Like Dr Gordon, Dr Ornish began as a devotee of an Indian guru, Sri Swami Satchidananda. He became involved with the Swami after dropping out of Rice University in 1972 in a state of suicidal depression.⁶⁴ It was apparently during this time that he formed his beliefs about the importance of a vegetarian diet with no added salt, sugar, or fat and no caffeine, combined with meditation, yoga, and exercise.

Dr Ornish has enthusiastically endorsed unscientific works by others, including Larry Dossey’s *Healing Words*⁶⁵ and psychic Judith Orloff’s *Second Sight*.⁶⁶ Dr Gordon’s

own Center for Mind-Body Medicine features an endorsement by Dr Ornish.⁶⁷

WILLIAM FAIR, MD

Dr Fair is former chief of urology services at Sloan-Kettering Cancer Center in New York City and is a disciple of Dr Ornish, to whom he turned for help with colon cancer in the mid-1990s. Dr Fair now credits dietary measures for his own cure and claims that similar approaches are effective with prostate cancer. At the first meeting of the commission he stated that “I honestly think we need to change medicine. . . . I think we need to bring these complementary and alternative medicine techniques into the practice of every doctor.”⁶⁸

Dr Fair is currently chairman of the Clinical Advisory Board of Health, LLC, through which he and his son promote “alternative” medicine.⁶⁹ He has also worked closely with the commission chair, Dr Gordon, in putting on a series of conferences promoting “alternative” medicine for cancer⁷⁰ and is on the board of Gordon’s Center for Mind-Body Medicine. Drs Fair and Gordon sit on the editorial board of Larry Dossey’s *Alternative Therapies in Health and Medicine*, which regularly features articles on paranormal healing as well as bioenergetics and shamanism.

THOMAS CHAPPELL

Thomas Chappell is a businessman with a degree from Harvard Divinity School. He runs Tom’s of Maine, a dietary supplement company,⁷¹ as well as a management consulting firm in Colorado called the Saltwater Institute.⁷² His supplement company makes unsubstantiated claims for its products, such as that Ginseng “revitalizes an active life-style” and that Echinacea “supports the immune system.”⁷³

Chappell and his wife were the recipients of an award from the Herb Research Foundation in March 2000. The group’s chairman lauded them as “two visionaries in the changing face of American business.”⁷⁴

CONCHITA M. PAZ, MD

Dr Paz, of Las Cruces, NM, is a family practitioner who appears to be interested in cultural issues in medicine. She is a member of the National Hispanic Medical Association.

BUFORD ROLIN

Mr Rolin has been the health administrator of the Poarch Band of Creek Indians since 1984. He is also a member of the Alabama Public Health Advisory Board and former chairman of the National Indian Health Board (NIHB). Mr Rolin’s primary interest has understandably been with the medically underserved communities of Native Americans. But the NIHB has endorsed Indian Health Service funding for “traditional healing,” apparently in the belief that this form of “holistic” care is a more realistic expectation for Native Americans.⁷⁵ Mr Rolin has voiced similar opinions.⁷⁶

JULIA R. SCOTT, RN

Ms Scott is the president of the National Black Women’s Health Project, has been active on behalf of the Children’s Defense Fund, and has served as an NIH consultant on African American health issues.

The appointment of the last 3 members of the commission appears to be an attempt to enlist the support of racial minorities in the cause of legitimizing irrational and aberrant medical claims and practices. This should be seen in the context of the ideological beliefs of other commission members, including its chair, in the notion that science is little more than a tool of cultural domination and oppression. But the result is that groups that are in the greatest need of accessible and equitable medical treatment are dissuaded from seeking it and led to be satisfied instead with standards inferior to science and reason.

That this recurrent theme in the “alternative” medicine movement could appeal to interest in cost saving at the expense of the lives and health of the nation’s elderly is particularly worrisome.⁷⁷ Former Colorado governor Richard Lamm’s assertion that elderly Americans have “a duty to die and get out of the way with all of our machines and artificial hearts and everything else like that” is apparently one with which some Americans agree.⁷⁸

Absent from the WHCCAMP are any individuals whose concern is primarily for sound science, evidence-based medicine, and the protection of the public from fraud. This is all the more surprising given the ready availability of many individuals who have established reputations as scholars of the subject of unproven, disproven, and irrational methods often subsumed under the heading of “alternative” and “complementary” medicine.

Further evidence that the commission was created

for the purpose of political advocacy is the fact that its executive director and executive secretary are also ideological proponents of aberrant methods. The former is Stephen C. Groft, who was the acting director of OAM at its inception. The latter, Michele Chang, is a massage therapist who has worked for Senator Harkin and says that she “help[ed] with the conception of this commission.” At the WHCCAMP’s first meeting she expressed her belief that there is a “need to consider hearing from people who are practicing CAM modalities in secret” but who “are afraid that they are going to be closed down once the authorities become involved.”⁶⁸

The secrecy and exclusivity surrounding the selection of the members of this commission is entirely consistent with what is now an established pattern of government support of “alternative” medicine that has been carefully orchestrated by ideological advocates and their political patrons. Not only is the composition of this commission not conducive to providing sound advice to the president, it seems all but certain that it is not intended to be.

*Consumer health activist E. Patrick Curry contributed materially to research for this article and was my coauthor on an earlier version of this material.*⁷⁹

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IN BRIEF

Childhood Vaccination Remains of Paramount Importance and Widespread Benefit

A national panel of public health scientists has declared that childhood vaccinations are safe and has urged Americans to continue to protect their children's health by immunizing them against common childhood diseases.

Their report, *The Promise of Vaccines: The Science and the Controversy*, is an in-depth review of issues and controversies related to childhood vaccinations. Published by the American Council on Science and Health (ACSH), it documents the widespread public health benefits of childhood immunization. Its author, David R. Smith, MD, is a pediatrician and president of the University of Texas Tech Health Science Center.

The Promise of Vaccines presents a comprehensive overview of vaccines and the science of immunity. Vaccines have been responsible for remarkable advances in disease prevention. Although their value has been questioned in the popular press, the vast majority of reports linking vaccines to various diseases do not meet the scientific criteria required to define a causal relationship between such vaccines and diseases.

According to Dr. Gilbert L. Ross, medical director of ACSH, "the benefits of childhood vaccination are more evident today than at any time in the past fifty years, and according to this report are likely to increase in the future."

The Promise of Vaccines describes the complex, interacting network of vaccine safety oversight that involves collaborative efforts among several government agencies—a system that ensures the continued safe development of new vaccines.

Vaccines have had a greater impact on protecting children from death and complications from infectious diseases than has any other public health intervention. The public health importance of continuing coverage was demonstrated by the measles epidemic of 1989–1991, a period when coverage levels fell.

"This important new report should be read by every pediatrician, family practitioner, and parent who is concerned about the best means of protecting children's health," stated Dr. Elizabeth Whelan, ACSH president.