

The Truth  *About Health*

Big Pharma: Mental Screening Programs Sell More Drugs

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Pharmaceutical companies are busy making huge donations to dozens of official-sounding mental health organizations that promote pseudo-scientific “mental health programs” to push even more customers onto their drugs.

Signs of Suicide, a program developed by the non-profit group Screening for Mental Health, Inc., is just one of many of these kinds of organizations, and possibly the largest and oldest. In 2005 alone, nearly 600,000 “screenings” were completed at some 12,000 facilities using their programs, according to their web site.

One might ask, how can a non-profit group afford to operate on such a large scale? Screening for Mental Health, Inc. tax records show that donations from 2001-2004 included nearly \$3.25 million from drug companies. Solvay Pharmaceuticals: \$27,500, Pfizer: \$750,000, Abbott Laboratories: \$35,000, Forest Labs: \$153,000, Wyeth Pharmaceuticals: \$100,000, and Eli Lilly: \$2,157,925.

Since Big Pharma is in business to make money for its shareholders, it stands to reason that Big Pharma wants to find as many people as possible they can convince to buy the idea that they are mentally deficient in some way, and who then will buy drugs for it.

Children are not safe from the drug sharks

TeenScreen, an invention of psychiatrist David Shaffer, is one of the most insidious screening programs because it has invaded the school systems in every state masquerading as a scientific process. It uses questionnaires on children as young as nine, asking questions like: “Have you often felt very nervous when you’ve had to do things in front of people?” and “Are you Hispanic or Latino?” Based on the answers, TeenScreen routes these kids to mental health professionals, who can and usually do decree that these children have “mental disorders” and need prescriptions for antidepressants and other psychotropic drugs. TeenScreen’s staff and advisory board are loaded with ties to Big Pharma stretching back more than 25 years.

TeenScreen’s Director, Laurie Flynn, was formerly the head of NAMI (National Alliance on Mental Illness). Between 1996 and mid 1999, NAMI received over 11 million dollars from the drug companies: Janssen (\$2.08 million), Novartis (\$1.87 million), Pfizer (\$1.3 million), Abbott Laboratories (\$1.24 million), Wyeth-Ayerst Pharmaceuticals (\$658,000), Bristol-Myers Squibb (\$613,505) and Eli Lilly (\$2.87 million).

The scandals of TeenScreen are not limited to drug company connections. Laurie Flynn also perjured herself in front of a Senate Subcommittee, stating that TeenScreen had partnered with the University of South Florida and were piloting the program in Hillsborough and Pinellas counties. Yet there were never any pilot programs in these two counties. In fact, the school board of Pinellas County soundly rejected TeenScreen, partially because of Flynn’s false testimony.

TeenScreen tried to block UK anti-child-drugging law

In 2003, drug regulators in the United Kingdom recommended that antidepressants not be used to treat children under eighteen years of age because of studies showing that the risks greatly outweighed any possible benefit. This is now law and included in their drug warnings. However, at the request of Pfizer, TeenScreen's David Shaffer created a letter which attempted to invalidate and block the findings of the U.K. drug regulators.

The results of pushing these dangerous drugs on children and adults include: murder, psychosis, brain damage, liver and heart damage, suicidal thoughts, attempted suicides and actual suicide — all known side effects of psychiatric drugs.

Drugs are big business, and the only difference between street dealers, drug lords and Big Pharma is that Big Pharma is legal. Whether your child is hooked by a dealer or by a psychiatrist, the end result will be the same.

As long as the psychiatric drug trade is legal, drug companies have a legal right to market their wares and make a profit. They do not have a right to slither into schools in order to find new profit centers amongst our children. The public has a right to know the truth about these criminal activities, and we all have a responsibility to protect our next generation from unwanted intrusions into their lives for profit.

SOURCE: <http://www.americanchronical.com/articles/viewarticle.asp?articleID=18805>