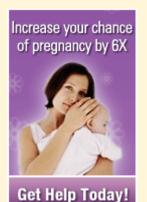
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## **Quackbusters Are Busted!**

Though they seem to have more lives than a cat, it seems likely that Quackbusters will be down for the count.

by Heidi Stevenson



25 July 2010

Amidst the morass of fallacious attacks by mainstream medicine on honest alternative approaches to health, now and then there's a glitter of good news. It's a breath of fresh air to announce that the self-styled Quackbusters, headed by a self-styled psychiatrist who failed his exam and was never accepted into the profession, has fallen to one of its targeted victims.

On 25 June, the tables were turned on Stephen Barrett. The Doctor's Data Laboratory, which does laboratory testing on issues of heavy metal, nutritional deficiencies, liver toxification, metabolic abnormalities, and environmentally-caused diseases sued Barrett for

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what, after getting through the legaleze, amounts to defamation of character, libel, conspiracy, and intentionally attempting to destroy their business.

The suit asks for \$5 million in damages and another \$15 million in punitive damages, plus injunctions to prevent Barrett from ever attempting to destroy their business in the future. Barrett has initiated many frivolous lawsuits against alternative practitioners, causing enormous trauma and expense to his victims, is currently out of cash. The last time Barrett was sued for libel, he relied on his homeowners insurance to defend him. That source of legal defense money appears not to be available to him now.

Barrett had until 12 July to file a response to the Federal lawsuit filed by Doctor's Data Lab. He never responded.

The corporation Barrett presided over, Quackwatch, which seems to have been the recipient of mysterious funding through most of its history, is now unable provide a defense. Aside from its websites, Quackwatch now appears to be defunct.

## Stephen Barrett, Lead Quackbuster

Stephen Barrett is a retired psychiatrist and hires himself out as an "expert" to testify against non-mainstream medical practitioners. He is a retired psychiatrist, though he was never certified because he didn't pass the board examinations. In America, once licensed as a physician, it's legal to practice any type of medicine desired. Simply take a look at the storefront self-styled plastic surgeons doing liposuction and other plastic surgery.

Barrett was terminated from a part time position by the Pennsylvania State Mental Hospital in 1993 and, in a profession that has supposedly been very short staffed for more than two decades, he was unable to find work. He turned his medical license in and retreated—some say to his basement.

Please understand that I would never make fun of someone's misfortunes in normal circumstances. In Barrett's case, though, an exception needs to be made. He has done enormous harm to anyone who advocates or practices non-mainstream medicine. He has hired himself out as an expert to testify against such practitioners, and he has been the mouthpiece for Big Pharma's attack on anything that isn't manufactured and sold by them.

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## **Barrett's Machinations for Self-Enrichment**

Barrett and Wallace Sampson MD were involved in Quackbusters' sister organization, National Council Against Health Fraud (NCAHF). Through it, they sought to enrich themselves by suing 43 different alternative health practitioners and suppliers, claiming that their products and methods didn't work. By some magical thinking, they expected their victims to make restitution by paying penalties to NCAHF. The first case was against King Bio, a supplier of homeopathic remedies.

The judge in the case raked them over the coals. (2) The court ruled:

- Neither Barrett nor Sampson was qualified to act as expert witnesses in the case.
- No evidence documenting the claims against King Bio was offered. The case was intended to be based on nothing more than the testimony of the two self-styled experts.
- Most damning was the court's finding that both Barrett and Sampson were tainted because they stood to gain financially if they'd won. Here is the relevant portion of the court's statement:

Both witnesses' fees, as Dr. Barrett testified, are paid from a fund established by Plaintiff NCAHF from the proceeds of suits such as the case at bar. Based on this fact alone, the Court may infer that Dr. Barrett and Sampson are more likely to receive fees for testifying on behalf of NCAHF in future cases if the Plaintiff prevails in the instant action and thereby wins funds to enrich the litigation fund described by Dr. Barrett. It is apparent, therefore, that both men have a direct, personal financial interest in the outcome of this litigation...In light of these affiliations and their orientation, it can fairly be said that Drs. Barrett and Sampson are themselves the client, and therefore their testimony should be accorded little, if any, credibility on that basis as well. [Emphasis added.]

In other words, the California Supreme Court found that Barrett and Sampson were using the court system to operate a self-enrichment scam! Barrett and his partner in crime, Sampson, were attempting to enrich themselves by destroying the reputations and livelihoods of alternative healthcare practitioners.

### **Barrett's Own Admissions of His Actions**

In Canada, Barrett admitted to claims made by a plaintiff<sup>(3)</sup> that:

The sole purpose of the activities of Barrett & Baratz are to discredit and cause damage and harm to health care practitioners, businesses that make alternative health therapies or products available, and advocates of non-allopathic therapies and health freedom.

Barrett has interfered with the civil rights of numerous Americans, in his efforts to have his critics silenced.

Barrett has strategically orchestrated the filing of legal actions in improper jurisdictions for the purpose of frustrating the victims of such lawsuits and increasing his victims costs.

Barrett failed the exams he was required to pass to become a Board Certified Medical Doctor.

Stephen Barrett founded and has been the figurehead of Quackbusters since its inception. What more should anyone require to acknowledge Quackbusters' lack of their authenticity?

## Where Has Barrett's—and Quackbusters'—Funding Come From?

Barrett has launched at least 14 expensive legal actions at a single time, cases that can be assumed to cost at least \$100,000 each to pursue. In the Federal Court in Oregon, he was forced to respond to questions about his income.

In two years' time, Barrett had made a total of \$54,000.

Where did Barrett get the money to pursue so many cases? Thus far, no one seems to have found the hard proof, but it's obvious that the backing for his nefarious machinations has been Big Pharma and Big Medicine, which seek to drive any and all competition out of business and make them illegal.

## **Quackbusters Keep Coming Back from the Dead**

In 1976, the American Medical Association (AMA) failed in its attempts to destroy chiropractic in America. A Federal court ruled that the AMA had carried out a covert operation against chiropractors,

and that they must cease in those activities.

The files of information that the AMA had collected somehow found their way into Stephen Barrett's basement.

### **Quackbusters' Websites**

Quackbusters quickly set up a series of interlinked websites and mastered the art of getting first-page listings on Google. These sites include NCAHF, Quackwatch, Acupuncturewatch, Allergywatch, Autismwatch, Bioethicswatch, Cancer Treatment Watch, Casewatch, Chelationwatch, Chirobase, Credentialwatch, Dentalwatch, Device Watch, Diet Scam Watch, Homeowatch, Infomercialwatch, Internet Health Pilot, Mental Health Watch, MLMwatch, Naturowatch, NCCAMwatch, Nutriwatch, Pharmwatch, and Quackwatch.

Each of these sites is set up on an identical layout with exactly the same image on the main page. They consist primarily of text lifted from other sources, mainly sites like government agencies. There is precious little original material. Most of the sites appear not to be updated or updated only rarely. They were created largely by reproducing articles published elsewhere. These sites have a life of their own. Once created, they simply sit there as their notoriety grows—and deluded people read them in the belief that they offer legitimate information.

### Quackbusters' Lack of Accountability

The Quackbusters sites all beg for money from the public, but only general claims about where the money goes are offered. No accounting of money has ever been provided to the public. Barrett claims on his Quackwatch site<sup>(4)</sup>, "My viewpoints are not for hire." As already documented above, that claim is demonstrably false. Someone has been paying the cost of funding his activities. Although Quackbusters have been highly successful in ruining the lives of several non-mainstream medical practitioners, it has rarely, if ever, been the result of successful legal prosecutions. Rather, it has been done through the act of filing frivolous lawsuits and creating a media frenzy around them. Doing this costs money—lots of it.

The practitioners themselves have not been the only ones directly harmed by Quackbusters. Insurance companies have pounced on claims made in lawsuits to avoid paying for legitimate claims. Thus, patients have also been made to suffer at the altar of Barrett's greed.

In 2004, Cavitat Medical Technologies, sued Aetna insurance company and named Quackwatch, along with Stephen Barrett, for "disseminating and publishing information regarding what it purports to be 'health-related frauds, myths, fads, and fallacies." (5) The basis of the lawsuit is that Aetna took advantage of Quackwatch's misinformation campaign to avoid paying legitimate medical claims. It's a RICO racketeering claim.

In 2006, after trying several Motions to Dismiss and deposing Consumer Advocate Tim Bolen as a "hostile witness", Aetna apparently realized that the company would not prevail against Cavitat—that reliance on Quackbusters had been their undoing. So, Aetna settled with Cavitat in a secret agreement. Their concern with being accused of racketeering with, as Bolen described the Quackbusters, "a group of lowlifes" likely influenced their willingness to make a deal. Bolen described the deposition like this:<sup>(6)</sup>

As the deposition progressed, Aetna attorneys left the room more and more. Their questions became more and more strident, as the realization set in with them that their whole defense in the Federal case was based on NONSENSE - and the false information, and suggestions, provided by Barrett and Baratz. And, it became obvious, from their body language, that they knew they were in trouble - and that the actual trial was going to begin June 12th, 2006 with famous California litigator Carlos F. Negrete bringing the Plaintiff's case to the jury.

You'd have thought that Quackbusters would fade away after that. But they appear to have nine lives. They just keep coming back. In their lifetime, they've spawned equivalent organizations in the UK, including the similarly-named HealthWatch, which originally called itself the Campaign Against Health Fraud (CAHF). This group has had more success, having been front and center in the Wellcome (now called GlaxoSmithKline) battle to eliminate all HIV drug competitors with their infamous product, AZT. They were largely successful in that endeavor. They have utilized the press to harrass and destroy several good and dedicated alternative health practitioners.

So, although Quackbusters have been busted, Stephen Barrett shows no indication that he is planning to quit. It does, though, appear that his secret funding source has dropped him. One can only hope.

Perhaps more people will wake to the truth and toss Quackbusters on their ear, along with any medical professionals who associate with them. As Tim Bolen wrote, people may be waking up to realize that, "You mean my mother didn't have to die that horribly, or even die at all?"

Then again, what's happening may be that Big Pharma and Big Medicine have their claws so deep into the regulatory system that they no longer need Quackbusters. It's obvious that they own the FDA and USDA. Is that why Quackbusters hasn't been able to launch a defense against The Doctor's Data Library? Have they been deserted by their sponsors, in favor of more effective tools?

Whatever the reason for Quackbusters' inability to defend itself, I wouldn't write them off. They've returned from the dead too many times to write them off yet.

Sorry - comments have been closed. A group of people took their marching orders from the WooMan himself to march over here to barrage the comments. Take a look, though, as it's rather interesting to see just how much they are reductionist, misleading, and most of all, trusting of the powers-that-be.



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- (1)Doctor's Data Laboratory Files Federal Lawsuit Against Barrett, Quackwatch, NCAHF, Consumer Health Digest...
- (2)California Superior Court's Ruling in NCAHO v. King Bio Pharmaceuticals, Inc.
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- <sup>(7)</sup>Dirty Medicine, by Martin J. Walker, published by Slingshot Publications, 1994. Walker's website is Slingshot Publications
- About the Bolen Report & Tim Bolen...
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