

Is It Time to Make Health Freedom a Constitutional Right?¹

By Dr. Len Saputo, with Byron Belitsos

A core principle of what I call Health Medicine is a patient's *right to freedom of choice* and their *right to know*. Whom are we kidding when, because of monopolistic medical practices, patients are not informed of all the treatments known from evidence to benefit their condition—especially alternative-medicine and natural healing treatments? What's the point of extending insurance to all Americans if they're blocked from making choices outside today's allopathic "sick-care" paradigm?

America is "the land of the free," yet the public is largely unaware of the state of affairs relating to medical freedom issues. Most people are shocked when they learn, for example, that it is a felony in California for a medical doctor to prescribe a nutritional therapy as a treatment for cancer. The only legal therapies permitted for treatment of cancer in California are surgery, radiation, and chemotherapy. This flies in the face of all logic and voluminous scientific literature.

Under our current system, some therapies must be administered against people's will, despite religious or personal beliefs that may be different from mainstream thinking. Health authorities can and do take children from their parents when certain therapies are refused. They can be placed into the custody of the state, put in foster homes, and forcibly administered those therapies deemed to be essential for life. The case of HIV-positive children is a clear example of this; mandates that all children (and certain adults) must take the new swine flu vaccine is about to become the next historic example.

Similar tactics occur with respect to certain types of cancer when they afflict children. Not only is treatment with chemotherapy mandated by law in these cases, but also alternative therapies are forbidden. A case in point is *medulloblastoma*, a cancer of the brain that is poorly responsive to surgery, radiation, and chemotherapy. These unfortunate children almost uniformly die within a few months to a couple of years with or without treatment. Yet, parents usually have no option except to go along with often traumatic mainstream therapy. What makes this more tragic is that a well-evidenced and far less invasive alternative exists.²

Now, all of us would agree that our medical authorities are well-intentioned individuals who are motivated to help us, not to hurt us. But what if, after you had researched an alternative or natural therapy intensively, you preferred to use this therapy instead of what was required by law? You and your child or loved one would be out of luck. That's why freedom of choice is high on the agenda of radical health care reform and could even rise to the level of a constitutional right. As we argue in our book, *A Return to Healing*, genuine freedom in these matters means greatly expanded publicly funded research into alternative and natural medicine, full disclosure to patients of all treatments supported by science, and insurance coverage for all such remedies—and not just for treatments supported within a disease-care paradigm marred by conflicts of interest and questionable science.

1. This article adapted with permission from *A Return To Healing: Radical Health Care Reform and the Future of Medicine* By Len Saputo, MD, with Byron Belitsos (Origin Press, September 2009)

2. To find out more on this subject, download a free copy of chapter 9 of "*A Return to Healing*" at: www.areturntohealing.com/excerpts.html