

Witchhunt Against Compounding Pharmacies Is Irresponsible and Political, Physicians Say

TUCSON, Ariz., Oct. 11, 2012 /PRNewswire-USNewswire/ -- The Association of American Physicians and Surgeons (AAPS) issued the following statement:

Calls by politicians to expand the power of the Food and Drug Administration (FDA) over compounding pharmacies are nothing more than political demagoguery.

No one knows yet (<http://abcnews.go.com/Health/meningitis-death-toll-rises-fda-oversight-questioned/story?id=17444841#.UHc0Sq7pWuK>) why some have died from fungal meningitis, a disease that is known to occur in individuals with weak immune systems. The CDC has not released any proof that the small outbreak was caused by anything improper done by a compounding pharmacy. If this is such a crisis, then why is there so little transparency in the information released by the CDC?

The media are irresponsibly jumping the gun, shooting first and asking questions later. The rush to judgment includes smearing a pharmacy in Massachusetts and then claiming that the Obama Administration could not have prevented this because the FDA is not powerful enough.

When bad outbreaks (<http://worldfocus.org/blog/2008/12/17/fda-failures-contribute-to-spread-of-contaminated-drugs/3287/>) have occurred due to medication sold by the pharmaceutical industry, which donates heavily to politicians, no stampede for a crackdown happens.

Government officials in Massachusetts have been more responsible than congressmen in reacting to the stories. The state director of Bureau of Health Care Safety and Quality confirmed that there is no basis for thinking that any of the numerous other compounding pharmacies in the state have done anything wrong (<http://www.wbur.org/2012/10/11/compounding-pharmacies-mass>).

Compounding pharmacies (<http://www.aapsonline.org/judicial/medicalcenter.htm>) play an essential role in the delivery of quality care. Some hospitals frequently turn to them when conventional suppliers run out. Shortages of essential medicines that already occur, owing largely to FDA overregulation, will become worse under ObamaCare.

The pharmacy at the center of this controversy, New England Compounding Center, was not a typical compounding pharmacy. It mass produced an injectable steroid and shipped it to 23 states, for administration to 13,000 patients. Most compounding pharmacies focus on customized preparations with tight quality controls, and they should remain under state, not federal, regulation.

NECC shares ownership with Ameridose, which does have an FDA license (<http://www.wickedlocal.com/norwell/newsnow/x1131681285/State-House-News-Investigation-into-compounding-company-widens-to-include-Ameridose#axzz290mvF8J4>) to manufacture large batches. The problem may have occurred *despite* already existing regulations.

But Big Pharma and its allies in Congress and the media dislike the competition provided by compounding pharmacies. Compounding pharmacies sell a progesterone medication to prevent preterm births for only \$25, when similar medication costs \$1,500 a dose from a big pharmaceutical company.

Exploiting a crisis to unjustifiably expand federal power is a familiar political tactic used by enemies of freedom. When the demands are made before the facts are fully known, as is happening now, then it is a misuse of a tragedy for political gain.

The [Association of American Physicians and Surgeons \(AAPS\)](http://www.aapsonline.org/) (<http://www.aapsonline.org/>) is a national organization representing physicians in all specialties, which was founded in 1943 to defend the sanctity of the patient-physician relationship.

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