

Marriage of Convenience: Mental Screening--Eli Lilly check \$500k

Sunday, 05 March 2006

Mental Screening ties to drug companies exposed. Screening for Mental Health (Harvard affiliated) received \$500K from Eli Lilly. See: <http://ahrp.org/children/mentalscreen/LillyCheck.jpg>

TeenScreen hired high powered PR firms whose business is to create promotional campaigns to increase drug sales for its clients.

Screening for Mental Health, Inc, a "non-profit" corporation affiliated with Harvard University--McLean Hospital claims to screen for "Signs of Suicide"-- A photograph from the Belmont Citizen-Herald provides "smoking gun" evidence that the mental screening campaigns are bankrolled by drug manufacturers. It shows SMH officials accepting an Eli Lilly check for \$500,000--a small investment for the billions the company stands to gain from mental screening leading to increased prescriptions. See the photo at: <http://ahrp.org/children/mentalscreen/LillyCheck.jpg>
Bellow are listed SMH board of directors and their affiliations.

Harvard's Screening for Mental Health has competition from Columbia University's TeenScreen--which promises to "catch them before they fall."

Both are obvious pharmaceutical market expansion gimmicks. They pretend to be "life saving" suicide prevention tools, but their tactics are as loathsome as --as valid as commercially motivated as snake oil sales pitches of yesteryear. In fact, there is no evidence of any valid suicide prevention tool. See:
<http://www.ahrp.org/children/teenscreen/debateNAS0206.ppt>

The sophisticated promotional campaign for TeenScreen is orchestrated and managed by powerful PR firms--Rabin Strategic Partners with Nelson Communications, and Widmeyer Communications. Their clients--you guessed it--are Big Pharma companies. See below.

Widmeyer Communication: "Marketing to young people has always been a sensitive topic. But as an audience of 40 million with annual buying power of \$364 billion, teens and "tweens" are important customers in the marketplace of products and ideas. For "social marketers" - namely organizations and government agencies striving to change behavior - three recent and ongoing campaigns demonstrate the powerful impact of sound research and strategic partnerships in achieving success."

As Dr. Richard Gosden and Dr. Sharon Beder report, "The development of political agenda-setting through the use of sophisticated public relations techniques is threatening to undermine the delicate balance of representative democracy." (The two authors are highly respected Australian authors and academics who have written numerous books and peer reviewed articles)

See: 'Pharmaceutical Industry Agenda Setting in Mental Health Policies', Ethical Human Sciences and Services, Fall/Winter 2001, 3(3):147-159. <http://homepage.mac.com/herinst/sbeder/pharm-agenda.html>.

SCREENING FOR MENTAL HEALTH Board of Directors <http://www.mentalhealthscreening.org/about/board.aspx>

Ross Baldessarini, M.D.
Professor of Psychiatry, Harvard Medical School
Senior Consulting Psychiatrist, Massachusetts General Hospital
Director at McLean Hospital of:
Bipolar & Psychotic Disorders Program
International Consortium for Bipolar Disorder Research
Laboratories for Psychiatric Research
Psychopharmacology Program McLean Hospital Belmont, MA

Leonard Freedberg, M.D.
Newton-Wellesley Psychia

Alan Weinstein
Vice President, Fixed Income Division, Fidelity Investments Wellesley, MA

Myrna Weissman, Ph.D.
Professor of Epidemiology & Psychiatry, College of Physicians & Surgeons of Columbia University New York, NY

TeenScreen PR Firms and their client list:

Rabin Strategic Partners <http://www.rabinpartners.com>

Steve Rabin, head of TeenScreen's PR firm, is an expert on the art of forming advocacy partnerships. More recently, Rabin has been applying his skills in partnership formation with the giant PR conglomerate Nelson Communications Worldwide.

Dr. Richard Gosden and Sharon Beder, wrote: "The public relations industry often refers to front groups euphemistically as "partners". Steve Rabin, a former executive vice president/general manager of Porter/Novelli, is an expert on the art of forming advocacy partnerships. According to Rabin Rabin has been applying his skills in partnership formation with the giant PR conglomerate Nelson Communications Worldwide. Nelson's client list includes Abbott Laboratories, AstraZeneca, Bayer, Bristol-Myers Squibb, Eli Lilly, Glaxo Wellcome, Hoffman-La Roche, Janssen-Cilag,, Lundbeck, Novartis, Pfizer, SmithKline Beecham, Wyeth-Ayerst International, together with the National Alliance for the Mentally Ill (NAMI). (Nelson Communications Worldwide, 2001).

Rabin's Services Include: Global monitoring of governments, the media, the marketplace, the web, advocacy groups, and internal audiences to identify trends and seize opportunities. They have provided strategic partner services for:

- Columbia University
- Janssen Pharmaceutica
- Johnson & Johnson
- Johnson & Johnson/Merck
- McNeil Consumer & Specialty Pharmaceuticals

"Beyond the Boardroom: Applying Proven Business Practices to Public Health Communication Monday, April 25, 2005 4:30PM – 6:30PM Emory University. The inaugural lecture, "Can Health Really Be Marketed Like Toothpaste?" will be presented by Steve Rabin, president of Rabin Strategic Partners. Rabin's lecture will include an insightful, provocative, critical, and inspiring discussion about the similarities and differences between consumer marketing and public health communications. Not just for communication professionals, Rabin's presentation will help all public health practitioners better understand such foreign topics as marketing, issues management, public affairs, and enterprise-wide communications.

See: <http://www.sph.emory.edu/healthcomm/boardroom/>

Case Study: DIRECT-TO-PATIENT ADVERTISING: Stopping a Bad Bill in Its Tracks

"Our client, one of the nation's largest publishers of free, consumer health information, faced a tremendous threat. A member of the California Senate introduced an anti-advertising bill that would ban sponsored direct-to-patient health newsletters.

Working under a pressing legislative deadline, Rabin Strategic Partners quickly developed our client's outreach strategy. We outlined the issue and communicated it to key stakeholders. We then went on to build a strong and diverse coalition opposed to the legislation of consumer and patient groups, medical societies and organizations protecting underserved populations. These groups were strategically recruited from the local districts of key members of the California Senate and Assembly.

Rabin Strategic Partners also developed and disseminated key messages to potential coalition members, members of the state legislature and the Schwarzenegger administration. Strong momentum built against the bill and highlighted that it actually would thwart patient information. In the end the bill's sponsor withdrew it from consideration."

Case Study: MENTAL HEALTH CHECK-UPS FOR TEENS: A Ten-Year Strategy and a Daily Responsibility:

"After a decade of extensive research, Columbia University perfected a simple questionnaire for teens that finds those at risk of suicide and suffering from unidentified mental illness, such as depression. The big question - how to offer a voluntary, mental health check-up to every American teenager before leaving high school?

Rabin Strategic Partners started to answer this question three years ago. We provided Columbia University with a ten-year strategy including the marketing, public policy and funding steps needed to launch the program nationally. Rabin Strategic Partners developed and managed public relations, lobbying and advertising to implement the plan. Now on a daily basis we track the media and political landscape to make sure the plan meshes with the current environment.

So far the strategy is paying off. Programs are established in almost 500 communities in 42 states and over 250 sites are in development. Thirty four national organizations support voluntary, mental health check-ups for teens. Just recently federal grants were awarded to four states to implement the program as part of their overall suicide prevention efforts."

Case Study: COLUMBIA GRADUATE SCHOOL OF JOURNALISM: Creating Coverage that Makes a Difference

"Our client wanted to help move media coverage of mental illness from the sensational to the supportive. Rabin Strategic Partners created a two and one-half day colloquium at the Columbia Graduate School of Journalism that allowed journalists new to mental health reporting to learn from established reporters from such outlets as The New York Times and The Wall Street Journal. Scientists and advocates participated in working sessions held in the school's World Room,

site of the annual Pulitzer Prize deliberations. The results were new story ideas for coverage that could make a difference in the lives of children with mental illness and more than 20 articles so far that incorporated insights from these sessions. A report of the colloquium proceedings was distributed to more than 500 reporters and other interested parties. "

According to Brandweek, April 11, 2005 "There are two new hires at Rabin Strategic Partners: Charles A. Borgognoni as partner and Rebecca S. Hoppy as communications associate. Borgognoni had been at Bristol-Myers Squibb. Hoppy served as assistant communications director at Columbia University's Division of Child and Adolescent Psychiatry."

*** AHRP obtained that report and uncovered the \$\$ connection: "The colloquium was sponsored by The Carmel Hill Family Foundation and unrestricted educational grants secured by the Division of Child and Adolescence Psychiatry from Janssen Pharmaceutical Products, LP and McNeil Consumer and Specialty Pharmaceuticals."

Widmeyer Communications

http://www.widmeyer.com/archives/2004/08/columbia_univer_1.php

Columbia University Division of Child & Adolescent Psychiatry

Overview

- While 90 percent of teens who commit suicide suffer from a treatable mental illness, the vast majority of parents, teachers and other adults are unaware that there is a problem. As a result, 60 to 80 percent of adolescents with depression will go undiagnosed and untreated.
- Columbia, through its TeenScreen program, had already been partnering with schools and communities across the nation to implement mental health screening programs for youths. It also created Positive Action for Teen Health - a national initiative to provide every teen in America with a voluntary "mental health check-up."

Communications Challenge

- Getting the word out to ensure that parents and other key players (educators, policymakers, the media, etc.) were aware of the Teen Screen program and the importance of mental health screening.

Strategy

- Combining our extensive knowledge in education; results-oriented communications expertise; in-house research, polling and design; and advertising capabilities, Widmeyer Communications devised a comprehensive national public health campaign involving media relations, partnership development, research, public affairs and advertising.

Tactics

- Convened a National Advisory Council to provide third party credibility. Members included former Iowa Governor Terry Branstad, former National Education Association President Bob Chase, actress Patty Duke, Nobel Laureate Dr. Eric Kandel, A Beautiful Mind author Sylvia Nasar, and Today Show medical reporter Ian Smith.
- Developed a website - www.TeenScreen.org - to provide important information about teen depression and suicide risk.
- Conducted a national poll investigating parent's attitudes toward teen mental health issues.
- Implemented an aggressive media relations effort to publicize the Positive Action for Teen Health initiative and its goals, including separate press launches in New York City and Washington, DC.
- Established partnerships with national education associations to secure the necessary support from the professional community.

Results

- Nationwide coverage in key outlets including The Washington Post, The Wall Street Journal, USA Today, AP, Reuters, more than 85 metropolitan newspapers, CNN Headline News, and a number of local TV affiliates in major media markets.
- In the first four weeks following the media launch, the site recorded more than 300,000 page views - as many in one month as for the entire preceding year.
- Since the launch, Columbia University has received over 1,000 requests for information on how to start a screening program at the community level.
- There are currently three bills pending in Congress related to teen mental health issues and six state governments are implementing plans to adopt statewide screening programs.

http://www.widmeyer.com/wire/2004/07/volume_5_issue_1.html

"March 2004 Special Issue: Reaching Youth with Important Messages: Research and Partnerships are Critical Elements To Successful Social Marketing to Young People

Marketing to young people has always been a sensitive topic. But as an audience of 40 million with annual buying power of \$364 billion, teens and "tweens" are important customers in the marketplace of products and ideas. For "social marketers" - namely organizations and government agencies striving to change behavior - three recent and ongoing campaigns demonstrate the powerful impact of sound research and strategic partnerships in achieving success.

Although the results make it look easy, it's important to note that in each of these three campaigns, the influential

messaging, creative tactics and effective "calls-to-action" were not created overnight. Those leading the efforts have committed significant time and energy to gain a deep understanding of the unique perspectives of target audiences - and have wisely tapped the power of intermediaries to reach and influence these audiences.

For the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services (HHS), which worked with Widmeyer Communications to create and launch the "Take A Stand. Lend A Hand. Stop Bullying Now!" campaign, this research involved numerous focus groups with young people and adults to understand the true impact and scope of bullying and a "Youth Expert Panel" that provided firsthand insight on every aspect of the campaign. To reach target audiences, the campaign then formed partnerships with more than 70 health, safety, education and faith-based organizations to determine which types of outreach materials would be most useful for adults who interact with youth on various levels.

For Columbia University, which turned to the firm to promote "TeenScreen" - a nation <http://www.teenscreen.org/images/logo.gif> effort to provide every teen in America with a voluntary school "mental health check-up" for depression and mental illness - research was carried out through a national poll investigating attitudes about teen mental health. This campaign team also formed partnerships with national education associations and a National Advisory Council that includes Former National Education Association President Bob Chase, actress Patty Duke, Nobel Laureate Dr. Eric Kendel, A Beautiful Mind author Sylvia Nasar, former Iowa Governor Terry Branstad and NPR's Jacki Lyden.

And for the Gay, Lesbian, Straight Education Network (GLSEN), ongoing research is being conducted through Widmeyer's Research & Polling division to gain direct insight from teens about the impact of anti-gay slurs in schools. This information will undoubtedly be useful in GLSEN's continuing success with the Safe Schools Action Network, which uses a remarkably savvy Internet-based approach to ensure that individuals from all walks of life can instantly weigh in on policies, media reports and special events that impact the lives of young people

A quick look at all of these efforts reveals the impact that can be created by a broad array of innovative and creative communications tactics. Log on to HHS' "Take A Stand. Lend A Hand. Stop Bullying Now!" Web site and you'll be drawn into suspenseful animated "Webisodes" about young people struggling to find the right response to bullying in a modern middle school. Conduct a news search about Columbia TeenScreen and you'll see news stories from CNN, the Associated Press, The Washington Post and more than 90 newspapers and local TV affiliates. Talk to hundreds of school counselors about the work of GLSEN, and you'll hear about nationwide "special events" such as "No Name Calling Week" and the "Day of Silence" in which 200,000 young people in 2,000 schools take a vow of silence to protest discrimination against lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender students in their schools.

For more information about these organizations and campaigns, visit www.stopbullyingnow.hrsa.gov, www.teenscreen.org, and www.glsen.org
Widmeyer Communications was hired to put together the PR campaign.

Tactics:

- Convened a National Advisory Council to provide third party credibility. Members included former Iowa Governor Terry Branstad, former National Education Association President Bob Chase, actress Patty Duke, Nobel Laureate Dr. Eric Kendel, A Beautiful Mind author Sylvia Nasar, and Today Show medical reporter Ian Smith.
- Established partnerships with national education associations to secure the necessary support from the professional community.
- Implemented an aggressive media relations effort to publicize the Positive Action for Teen Health initiative and its goals, including separate press launches in New York City and Washington, DC."

AHRP question to TeenScreen administrators & the federal agency that supports TeenScreen (Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration (SAMHSA)

If the goal of TeenScreen is not to promote increased use of psychotropic drugs, why did TeenScreen hire high powered PR firms whose business is to create promotional campaigns to increase sales for its clients--manufacturers of psychotropic drugs?

Contact: Vera Hassner Sharav
veracare@ahrp.org