

C-Span

To Whom It May Concern,

I want to express my disappointment with the way your interview with "Dr." David Kessler was carried out. I have often watched C-Span with respect to the quality of reporting, and journalism that C-Span reflected. But, it was obvious that this interview was staged with a specific agenda in mind, to provide Kessler with positive, though not truthful, media exposure. He has continued to use the media to his benefit, and the media has continued to allow itself to be used.

Kessler spoke about the need for preventive health, nutrition, and even the value of vitamins, but under his direction, FDA has taken more unjustified action against preventive and natural health care than any administration in twenty years. Two callers spoke of FDA's DEA-style raid, with guns drawn on a medical clinic. Mr. Kessler stated that FDA officers do not carry firearms. This is a blatant lie. FDA has a criminal investigations division whose officers are authorized to carry firearms when duly deputized. These officers are trained in Quantico, Virginia. The same training grounds for the FBI. He stated the officers "removed the lock". The landlord of the building was standing there waiting to open the door with his pass key. NO! They broke the door down, held the medical assistants at gun point, and began to rip out phones!

I will continue to watch C-Span because it is the best coverage I can get for the Congressional hearings, but I would hope you will take my comments to heart. Maybe, the media is meant to be "used". I just wish someday there will be something better.

Sincerely,

Soquel, Ca. 95073

Armed agents make 'B-vitamin bust' in Kent

By Tom Paulson
and George Foster
P-I Reporters

KENT — Dozens of state and federal law enforcement officers broke down the doors of a Kent medical clinic yesterday, some with guns drawn, in what the physician there described as the "great B-vitamin bust."

"This is just plain old B-vitamin complex," said an exasperated Dr. Jonathan Wright, who promotes nutrition and vitamins as an alternative to some traditional medical treatments.

Yesterday, Food and Drug Adminis-

tration agents with assistance from King County Police and the U.S. Attorney's Office descended upon Wright's Tahoma Clinic in Kent just before it was to open its doors for the day.

Clinic staff said they heard a pounding at the back doors and, before they could answer, officers burst through with weapons drawn.

"They came in with their guns pointed at us and told us to freeze," said Julie Gallegos, a medical assistant at the clinic.

Receptionist Marge Murphy said FDA agents wearing flak vests "broke through the main door yelling" and one of them

pointed a gun in her face.

"He told me 'get your hands up where I can see them,'" Murphy said.

Clinic manager Pennie Morehead said agents yanked telephone lines out of walls after one employee tried to make a call. Morehead said many of the employees were very upset and crying. One employee with a history of heart problems, Patty Hoops, suffered a mild heart irregularity during the fracas and was treated at the scene by the clinic's physician's assistant, Vickie Volman.

"I'm outraged at the way they treated us, like criminals," Gallegos said.

FDA officials, locally and at the

national office in Washington, D.C., declined to comment yesterday. Inquiries were referred to the local U.S. Attorney's Office, which also declined comment.

Wright, detained briefly by FDA agents, said the agents appeared to be targeting his use of injectable B-vitamin complex. Because he treats many people with allergies, Wright said he imports from Germany the only injectable B-vitamins manufactured without preservatives or additives.

"They're used all around the country," Wright said. He was not charged.

See **BUST**, Page B2

Bust: Pharmacy that serves clinic also raided by FDA agents

From Page B1

with a crime, but is unsure whether he will be allowed back into his office today.

A copy of the search warrant, issued to FDA investigator Spencer Morrison by U.S. Magistrate Judge John Weinberg, said the agency intended to search for and seize a number of drugs or products besides vitamin-B products, along with equipment, business and medical records and computerized records.

A moving truck was parked at the clinic's back door yesterday, but Wright said investigators refused to tell him what was being removed.

Agents also raided the For Your Health Pharmacy in the

same Meridian Place shopping plaza at Southeast 240th Street and 132nd Avenue Southeast where Wright's clinic is located.

Owner-pharmacist Raymond Suen said agents told him when they entered at 9 a.m. with a search warrant that they were closing the drugstore down for the day. The pharmacy serves patients from Wright's clinic.

"My pharmacy serves nutritional doctors all over the country," said Suen. "Right now the FDA does not like people that use nutritional means to help patients."

"If they're allowed to do this, it's going to badly cripple our business," Wright said.

"This is going on everywhere," said John Weeks, executive direc-

tor of the American Association of Naturopathic Physicians based in Seattle. Weeks said the FDA recently conducted similar raids on a natural food store chain in Texas.

"The FDA has been taking a very harsh view toward natural products," he said.

The irony, Weeks said, is that even as growing scientific evidence supports the health benefits of vitamins, nutrition and so-called natural remedies, the FDA is becoming less tolerant.

It is especially puzzling, he said, since there is little risk of patient harm in most cases. He noted that state law allows physicians, allopathic or naturopathic, to inject vitamin B.

"Much of the FDA activity

seems to be totally unrelated to protecting against any actual public harm," Weeks said.

Wright and some of his supporters feel the FDA is harassing them. They believe the federal agency is encouraged by the powerful interests that want health care to remain under the control of the medical and pharmaceutical industries.

Wright said he has never been disciplined by the state Medical Disciplinary Board or been charged with a crime.

Wright did undergraduate work at Harvard University, received his medical degree from the University of Michigan and served his residency at Group Health Cooperative before starting his private practice.

SOQUEL, Ca 95073



C-Span
attn: Viewer Services
400 Capitol St. NW - Suite 650
Washington, DC 20001