

3/27/2000

Re: 3/20/2000 OHD advisory committee minutes

Dear Dr. Harris:

I reviewed the minutes and spoke to other panel members to see if my recollection of the March 20, 2000 meeting was correct. After finding that my recall was not unique, I wish to add the following page as an addendum to the minutes or have the areas in quotes be incorporated into revised minutes.

1. On page 2 of 5, first paragraph, there is an omission. I would like to add this or something similar to or following that paragraph.

"Some panel members do not recall being told at the first meeting to recruit outside experts for physical presentations to the panel. Some panel members first became aware that the March 20<sup>th</sup> meeting was for something other than patient interviews only when the March 20<sup>th</sup> agenda was received the business day before the actual meeting."

2. On page 2 of 5 in the third paragraph, there is an omission. I would like to add this or something similar to or following that paragraph.

"Some panel members recall that Mr. Fitts emphasized a difference between Cannabis treatment for 'thought disorders' like schizophrenia versus Cannabis treatment for 'mood disorders' like depression and anxiety. He recommended against Cannabis for thought disorders but supported Cannabis for mood disorders. He also said he could have had hundreds of patients testifying if he had been given more advance notice."

3. In the same paragraph you state, "He submitted a book chapter that debunks the effectiveness of pharmaceuticals that FDA-approved for the treatment of mental disorders, and spoke of the relative benefit and lack of harm of marijuana in providing such treatment in comparison to approved medication." I disagree with your description of the chapter from Dr. Valenstein's book. One neutral option may be to revise the minutes and delete the first part of your sentence and just state, "He submitted a chapter entitled, "How the Pharmaceutical Industry Promotes Drugs and Chemical Theories of Mental Illness" from the book Blaming the Brain: The Truth About Drugs and Mental Health by Elliot S. Valenstein, PhD. He spoke of the relative . . ."

Another option would be to add this or something similar to or following that paragraph.

"Dr. Bayer carefully read the submitted chapter, "How the Pharmaceutical Industry Promotes Drugs and Chemical Theories of Mental Illness" from the book Blaming the Brain: The Truth About Drugs and Mental Health by Elliot S. Valenstein, PhD. He thinks that the title, first two sentences, and the last sentence in the chapter best summarize this long chapter.

These are, "If psychotherapeutic drugs did not help anyone they would not be prescribed in such large numbers and there would not be any chemical theories of mental disorders. However, the percentage of patients who are helped by psychotherapeutic drugs is much lower than commonly claimed, and many patients experience some fairly serious adverse side effects from drug treatment . . . Although it may not shock anyone to read that the pharmaceutical industry is not different from any other major industry in devising ways to advance and protect its own interest, many are not aware of the enormous influence that the industry has in shaping our views of mental disorders and the effectiveness of psychotherapeutic drugs."

In addition Mr. Fitt's book chapter documents financial relationships between some of the organizations that testified as "experts" and the pharmaceutical industry (e.g. the National Alliance for the Mentally Ill -NAMI and the American Psychiatric Association and their financial relationships to the pharmaceutical industry).

If it is easiest, you are certainly welcome to simply add my letter to clarify the minutes. Thank you very much.

Sincerely,

Richard Bayer, MD