Compulsory Medical Treatment Is Un-American

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Why are American infants and schoolchildren being forced to submit to hepatitis B vaccinations even though the French Health Ministry has stopped giving them because of evidence they can cause neurological disorders and multiple sclerosis? Has America become a nation where bureaucrats can force controversial medical procedures on children without informed choice by parent or child?

If you think such things only happen in Communist China, think again. Big Brother is on the march and his weapon is a hypodermic needle carrying the vaccine for hepatitis B.

""Force" is not too strong a word. Across the country, newborn babies are being injected with hepatitis B vaccine only hours after birth (even when their mothers test negative for hepatitis B), and children are told they must present proof of having received three hepatitis B shots before they can be admitted to daycare, kindergarten, fifth grade, high school, or college.

I first became interested in the hepatitis B vaccine when, in connection with the birth of two new grandchildren, I learned that hospitals are routinely injecting newborns with the vaccine during their first 24 hours of life. A series of inquiries produced no convincing medical reason or scientific evidence for this procedure.

My new grandchildren were not at risk for hepatitis B, which is primarily an adult disease transmitted through bodily fluids. Those most at risk are the highly promiscuous (heterosexual or homosexual), needle-sharing drug addicts, health care and custodial workers exposed to blood, and babies born to already-infected mothers.

According to a Centers for Disease Control (CDC) report, there were only 10,637 cases of hepatitis B in the United States in 1996, including only 279 cases in children under the age of 14. Hepatitis B is not fatal for most who contract it, is not epidemic except among those high-risk groups, and bears no relation

to hepatitis A (the disease sometimes picked up in restaurants when food-handlers don't wash their hands).

For the problem of 279 children who have hepatitis B, millions of U.S. children are being forced to submit to vaccination consisting of three hepatitis B shots! Where does such an intrusive and expensive rule originate, and how can it be enforced nationally since immunizations are a state, not a federal, matter?

The federal medical police have figured out how to override state authority (and even pediatricians who might otherwise act in the interest of their patients), and develop an intricate system outside of the spotlight of public scrutiny and without accountability. CDC endorses a given vaccine, the state legislatures delegate the decision-making power to state public health departments, the unaccountable bureaucrats make regulations that conform to CDC instructions and have the impact of law, and the drug manufacturers spend millions to advertise their products.

The CDC uses carrot and stick to force states to obey federal mandates. The CDC has doled out hundreds of millions of taxpayer dollars to reward state health departments for promoting mass vaccinations, and has the power to withhold money grants if state health officials don't show proof of designated vaccination rates.

The 1993 Comprehensive Childhood Immunization Act, signed by President Clinton, gave the Department of Health and Human Services (HHS) $400 million to award to states to set up state vaccine registries to tag and track children so that Big Brother can hunt them down and compel vaccinations. States receive either $50, $75 or $100 per child who is fully vaccinated with all federally recommended vaccines, including hepatitis B.

When I entered public school, the only vaccination required was for smallpox, and that's the only immunization I ever had. Most states now require children to be injected with about 33 doses of 9 or 10 different viral and bacterial vaccines in order to enter public school, including three doses of hepatitis B vaccine.

In 1995, HHS Secretary Donna Shalala gave the states the power to appropriate newborn babies' social security numbers in order to set up vaccine tracking registries. The CDC plans to network all the state vaccine tracking registries in order to create a de facto centralized electronic database containing every child's, and ultimately every American's, medical records.

More than 22,000 reports of hospitalizations and injuries, including 300 deaths, following hepatitis B vaccination have been reported since 1990 to the U.S. government's Vaccine Adverse Event Reporting System. There have been no controlled studies to evaluate these reports, there is no adequate proof of the vaccine's long-term safety, little is known about its effect on a newborn baby's immune system, and the disclaimers that the drug manufacturers put on the hepatitis B vaccine package are downright disturbing.

The hepatitis B vaccine may give only a temporary immunity, and it is not clear when booster shots will be required. Some of those who receive the hepatitis B vaccine may thereafter test positive for hepatitis B because many routine blood tests are not sophisticated enough to differentiate between prior vaccination and the disease.

Freedom in America should include allowing parents to make their own informed choice about injecting their babies with a potentially dangerous vaccine. More information is available from the National Vaccine Information Center (1-800-909-SHOT and www.909shot.com).