

Unchecked Power

Written by Robert F. Kennedy Jr.

Tuesday, 01 September 2015 00:00 - Last Updated Friday, 15 September 2017 08:01

Robert F. Kennedy Jr.'s speech on the corruption surrounding the CDC's vaccine division

I was dragged, kicking and screaming, into this fight. And it was by a series of extraordinary women who, year after year, when I spoke about mercury coming from power plants, would come up to me after my speeches and say, "You need to look at the science about mercury in vaccines because it is, by far, the largest vector for mercury exposure to our children."



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I was reluctant because vaccines weren't really my wheelhouse. But I am comfortable reading science. I do that for my job. I've tried hundreds and hundreds of cases, almost all of them involving scientific questions. So I started looking at the science. And it was so shocking.

Then I began calling the other side—top people at the CDC; Kathleen Stratton, Colleen Boyle, and people like Paul Offit—to ask them to explain the science to me. Listening to them, it didn't make any sense, and I realized they had nothing to stand on. And I continued to pursue the science.

Here I am today. I am pro-vaccine. I had all six of my kids vaccinated. I think that vaccination saved millions of lives and that we ought to have policies that encourage full coverage. But that's not going to happen until we have safe vaccines; until we have a regulatory agency that has integrity and credibility with the American public. And that's what we ought to be focusing on. That's what government officials ought to be focusing on—restoring integrity to the CDC. Because the CDC is a very troubled agency, and it's not just me saying this. There have been four separate, scathing, federal studies by the United States Congress: a three-year study by Congressman Burton, a follow-up study by Senator Coburn's committee, another study by the inspector general of the Department of Health and Human Services (HHS) in 2008, and a study last year by the Office of Research Integrity of HHS. All of those studies paint the CDC as an absolute cesspool of corruption, as an agency that has fallen under the spell of this trillion-dollar Big Pharma industry. Instead of serving its primary mission, which is to protect public health, its mission now, according to these federal studies, is to serve the mercantile interests of the vaccine industry.

So there are two areas of corruption in the CDC's vaccine division. The first is the division that chooses which vaccines to add to the schedule. Now, when I was a little boy, I got five vaccines. My older children got 22 vaccines; the younger ones got 69 vaccines. And these vaccines keep getting added to the schedule. They began in 1989. The CDC changed the schedule, doubling the amount of mercury in vaccines. They did that because in 1986 the pharmaceutical industry was given, by Congress, immunity from lawsuits. So it suddenly became very profitable to make vaccines. And an industry that once had been a kind of stepchild of Big Pharma, now became one of the profit centers, because they could make a product that the federal government orders people to buy. There's no advertising, there's no market, the patents never expire, and [they] can't be sued. So no matter how badly [they] make that product, no matter how many defects it has in it, nobody can ever hold [them] accountable. So they began making these vaccines and adding them to the schedule. When a pharmaceutical company adds that vaccine to the schedule, the value of it to that company can [increase] as much as a billion dollars.

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We would expect, and we would hope, that the advisory committees that make the decision to add new vaccines to that schedule would be independent scientists who have nothing in mind except the safety of our children. But that's not true. What the Inspector General's report (and I urge those of you in the press to go look it up, it's the 2008 Inspector General of HHS) said is that virtually all of the members of those committees have financial entanglements with the vaccine companies. I'll give you an example. Dr. Paul Offit, whom many of you know is a vaccine industry tycoon and insider, the principal promoter of vaccines in this country for the vaccine industry, who is on the vaccine industry payroll, in 1999 sat on the committee that approved [and added] the rotavirus vaccine to the schedule. At the time, he was working on his own rotavirus vaccine. Opening that gateway by adding that vaccine to the schedule made his patent extremely valuable. And six years later he sold that patent for \$182 million and pocketed about \$40 million himself.

That kind of financial entanglement by the people who are deciding what vaccines to add to the schedule makes it difficult for all of us to believe that the only thing that they are thinking of is our children's health. And what the Inspector General report said is that 97 percent of the people who sit on those panels have the same kind of financial entanglements and conflicts-of-interest as did Paul Offit. So there are now 16 vaccines— 69 shots [or] inoculations that our children get. There are 271 new vaccines in the bureaucratic pipeline at the CDC awaiting approval, which in all likelihood will ultimately be added to the schedule. And Paul Offit says that he believes that it's blue sky for Wall Street after that, because he thinks, [and] he has said publicly, that children can take as many as 10,000 vaccines.

When you go to these vaccine committee hearings, it's not a bunch of scientists in white lab coats. It's a bunch of Wall Street analysts in suits. And as soon as that decision is made, they run out of the room and get on their cell phones and you can watch that stock price spike. So these are financial decisions that are being driven by a trillion-dollar industry and we need to restore the integrity of that agency.

Now the other part of the vaccine division is the immunology safety division, which are the scientists who are charged with making sure that our vaccines are safe and efficacious. But what we now know, from looking at the science and the phony epidemiological studies that they produce, is that this division is extremely corrupt. A senior scientist at the CDC, a 17-year veteran, Dr. William Thompson, who is the lead author on the most important of those studies, has now invoked, as of August, federal whistleblower protection, and has hired Morgan Verkamp, one of the leading whistleblower attorneys in our country. [He] has said publicly that the CDC scientists in that division have been required by their bosses for at least a decade to lie, to manipulate, to massage data, and to bury data that connect neurological disorders including autism to thimerosal exposure and to vaccines.

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And he has turned over tens of thousands of pages of documents to Congress and he wants to be subpoenaed and to testify so that the American press will finally have to begin covering something that we have known about for a decade.

So here is the problem: All of the checks and balances in our society that normally would protect children from a rapacious industry have been neutralized.

As we've said, the pharmaceutical industry is one of the biggest industries in the world. It's a trillion-dollar industry. It is the number-one lobbyist in Washington, D.C., and the state capitols. It gives \$2.6 billion—twice what oil and gas gives to our political leaders. The pharmaceutical industry gives four times to our politicians what defense and aeronautic contractors do. This is an industry that has complete possession of our politicians at Capitol Hill. The politicians are no longer protecting the public. The regulatory agency has become captured by the industry it's supposed to regulate. The CDC is now a sock puppet for the pharmaceutical industry and is representing the mercantile interests of that industry. Promoting them, rather than our public health, is their primary priority.

The lawyers and the courts that would also form a barrier—a check and balance against the power of this very wealthy industry—are also gone because the pharmaceutical industry has used its political clout on Capitol Hill to get laws passed to make it illegal for people who've been injured by vaccines to sue the company that injured them. So there's no discovery, there are no depositions, there are no document searches. You can go to the vaccine court, which is essentially a secret court that doesn't advertise. Even the vaccine court estimates that fewer than 10 percent of the people who are injured by vaccines and who could make claims ever show up there. And when you get there you're not suing the industry that poisoned you: You're suing the federal government. Nevertheless they paid out \$3 billion to thousands and thousands of people who've been injured by the vaccines.

So you have the politicians that have been neutralized, you have the regulatory agency neutralized. You have the courts and lawyers gone. What's left? The press. Well, the pharmaceutical industry is the single biggest advertiser on television, radio and newspapers. They give between \$3.4 and \$5.6 billion a year in advertising. So you will not see a network news show covering this issue honestly, ever. And you guys all know that. There's this kind of Kafkaesque censorship in the news about having a reasonable debate about this issue—a fact-based debate. So instead we hear a lot of name calling because they can't debate us on the merits. They call us anti-vaccine. They call us hysterical. They call us conspiracy theorists. I want people who use the term "anti-vax parents" to be thinking of a parent with a disabled child, because that's who they are.

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I want to say one other thing. This movement that calls you anti-vax is the most misogynistic movement that I have seen in my lifetime. It is a movement that is anti-mother and it is anti-woman. The names that I hear coming out of people's mouths about hysterics, and "refrigerator moms," and all of this in our major newspapers like The New York Times, is extraordinary. And I want to say something about these women before I stand down. I was raised around extraordinary women. My grandmother, Rose Kennedy, was mother of three senators, and the mother of a President. My aunt Eunice Shriver started the Special Olympics. But I have never met women like the ones that I have met in this movement. They are articulate. They're eloquent. They're pharmacists. They're doctors. They're lawyers. They have read the science. They know what the science says. And they can destroy any of these politicians if they were given the ability to debate.

The CDC is up there saying, "Oh, well, we don't know if this is an epidemic." They will not call it an epidemic.

They will not call it a crisis. They call it a "health concern," and they say, "Well, maybe we're just noticing kids who are this sick for the first time, but they've been around this whole time." And I would ask you, where is this population of adults that's wearing football helmets and diapers and that is not verbal. They don't exist. They don't exist in the 30-year-old cohort. They only exist in our children. They're in school now and they're costing this country \$400 billion a year and they're about to hit our social safety nets and they're going to collapse it. And it's going to become a concern for all Americans now.

These women and these parents are traumatized by what happened to their children. They're people who are bankrupted. They have a 75 percent divorce rate. They can't go out at night. They can't leave their child with a babysitter. They are tied at home. And they don't have time for politics. They have been politically invisible until this moment. They're traumatized by what happened to their child, they're traumatized by the doctors and the public health organizations and press that told them what they say isn't true—what they know to be true is not true. But now they're coming out because they see another threat that they are going to be triply traumatized. They're being told that no matter what happens, no matter what they know about their child's health, that all of the barriers between that pharmaceutical company and them are now being taken away and now they're going to remove the mother from the equation as well.

So that's what this is about—all of the barriers that are meant to protect our children: the government, the lawyers, the regulatory agency, and the press. The checks and balances in our democratic system that are supposed to stand between corporate power and our little children have been removed. There's only one barrier left, and that's the parents. We need to keep that

in the equation. Thank you.

A Response to Frank Bruni

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Frank Bruni's angry tirade against me in his Sunday New York Times column took me by surprise. Last February, we'd had a brief, friendly, and mutually respectful telephone conversation. He had written an article about vaccine safety at the end of January and I asked if he would allow me to show him some of the recent scientific studies linking thimerosal to a range of brain injuries. I also wanted to show him the transcripts of statements by CDC whistleblower Dr. William Thompson, discussing the troubling disarray and deception within the CDC's vaccine program. Bruni told me he would be delighted to look at the materials. He said he was under deadline at the moment, but he cordially invited me to call back to schedule lunch. Both of us are busy and so I was not surprised that he did not return my follow-up call the next week. Bruni now reveals that he was deliberately dodging my phone call because he was frightened that I would use the lunch meeting to "scaremonger" him.

It's disappointing that a columnist for America's leading publication can be "scaremongered" by facts. The sad outcome is that instead of the enlightened, civil debate that our country deserves, Bruni delivers in this past Sunday's column the same tired species of invective and ad hominem attack that have long characterized this controversy.

In the two instances that he ventures from insult into substance, Bruni gets it wrong. Bruni erroneously suggests that mercury has been removed from all pediatric vaccines. In fact there are massive doses of mercury in some meningitis vaccines—now mandated for all schoolchildren in New York—and in vaccines given to pregnant women, infants, and annually to public school kids. Mercury remains in mandated pediatric HepB, Hib and DTap vaccines at double the concentrations deemed safe by the EPA. To the ingredients of those vaccines, pharmaceutical companies have recently added aluminum adjuvants that act synergistically to dramatically amplify the neurotoxicity of the remaining mercury. Finally, pharmaceutical companies have merely reduced mercury levels in pediatric vaccines given to American

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children. We continue to send the range of pediatric vaccines fully loaded with mercury to children in developing nations in Asia, Africa, Latin America and the Middle East, a practice that will haunt our country in many dreadful ways.

In defending thimerosal safety, Bruni alludes to the debunked industry canard that the ethylmercury in vaccines is less persistent in the body and therefore less toxic than the heavily regulated methylmercury in fish. However, the best and most recent science shows that ethylmercury is twice as persistent in the brain (Burbacher et al, 2005), and 50 times as toxic as methylmercury in fish (Guzzi et al, 2012).

Bruni acknowledges that he relies on the CDC's version of what the science says rather than reading the science himself. There is a peril in unctuous faith in government orthodoxies. Four scathing federal studies by Congress, the U.S. Senate, the HHS Inspector General, and the HHS Office of Research Integrity paint the CDC's vaccine division as a cesspool of corruption due to scandalous conflicts with the \$30 billion vaccine industry. In August, the CDC's senior vaccine scientist, Dr. William Thompson, invoked federal whistleblower protection, confessing that CDC supervisors systematically require vaccine division scientists to bury data linking vaccines to autism and other neurologic harms.

In our book *Thimerosal: Let the Science Speak*, a review of the published science, Dr. Martha Herbert, Dr. Mark Hyman and I identified hundreds of peer-reviewed studies by leading government and university scientists showing that thimerosal, a mercury-containing preservative, is a devastating neurologic toxin linked to neurological disorders now epidemic in American children, including ADD, ADHD, low IQ, speech development delays, and tics. I have attached a digest of these studies as an addendum to this article on my website. We found no published study proving thimerosal safe.

Bruni is left making the strange and anemic argument that if pharmaceutical companies were truly driven by greed, as purportedly cynical thimerosal opponents believe, Pharma's best business strategy would be to stop manufacturing vaccines, let contagions run rampant, and then profiteer on medicine sales. I'm not jumping into that shark tank with Bruni, but I will dip in one toe by pointing out that Pharma is making plenty of dough selling Adderall, Prozac, and dozens of other best-selling drugs to treat the neurological injuries that now affect one in six American children. All these illnesses are consistent with symptoms documented in mass mercury poisonings around the globe.

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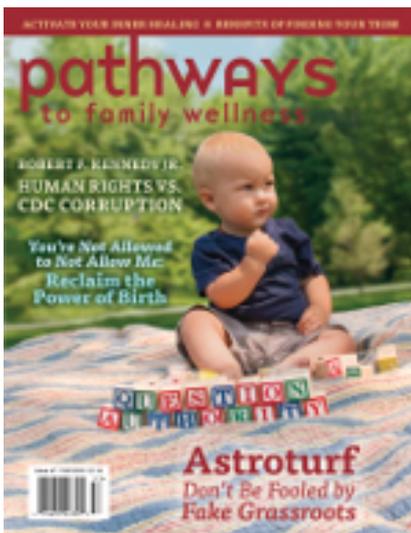
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Frank Bruni and other American journalists need to start reading the science themselves and stop letting compromised government bureaucrats tell them what the science supposedly says.

The media's undue reverence for the CDC has emboldened bad agency behavior that jeopardizes vaccine safety. The best way to promote vaccine participation and compliance is through intense media scrutiny that will restore integrity and credibility at the CDC.

— Robert F. Kennedy Jr.



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