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Who is Peter Mekeel to practice pain medicine?

The column “**Just a regular guy...hooked on pain pills**” is a disgrace to Lancaster journalism and a lapse in the judgment of not only the columnist, that as far we know is not a physician let alone a specialist in pain medicine, but also of his editors.

It isn't just irresponsibly bad journalism because of the misinformation and conclusions it implies, but rather because it jeopardizes the very lives of hundreds of persons living in Lancaster County who suffer from great pain.

Here is what Mekeel says: *“He had injured his back at work. Years of lifting and bending had taken its toll. Surgery, physical therapy and pain pills followed. Then a desk job. But the acute and chronic pain persisted So his doctor tried a wider variety of pills: Vicodin, Oxycontin, Percocet. But the pain grew. So did his craving for the pills. Then he got laid off. And his new job in essence, became finding devious ways to get more drugs. He was hooked in a big way.”*

Because of lack of research, Mekeel has it all wrong! The sad situation is likely caused by the lamentable ignorance of physicians concerning prescribing the appropriate amount of pain medicine, or their fear of losing their licenses and

going to jail because they will be accused of over-prescribing a narcotic.

The amount of pain medicine required to allay suffering varies enormously from one person to another, having to do with their metabolism. One person could require twenty times or more pain killer than another. If the subject was withering in pain, he was probably being under medicated. When he was gaming the system, he was simply trying to find relief.

Those who do properly treat pain patients often find themselves in great trouble because they gain a deserved reputation for bringing relief to under-treated chronic sufferers, so others seek them out. Before long they are writing a large amount of prescriptions for narcotics and have the DEA and the medical association investigating them.

Furthermore, the medical colleges do not provide adequate education about pain medicine, a circumstance that has attracted recent attention.

For reliable information, we invite Mekeel, editors and our readers to visit <http://proxychi.baremetal.com/csdp.org/publicservice/debunking.pdf>

LETTER: Library escape and fun

“Because of no raises....and everything going up... I have made the library my source of escape and fun. I go often because it is a place where I can dream....While there, I see many people that are less fortunate that need a place especially now to go. Don't take away something so valuable.”

LETTER: Throw city into bankruptcy and renegotiate contracts

“I am so sick of hearing about the understaffed fire department that I could puke. Most of the reason taxes are so high is that the salaries AND

BENEFITS of the police and firefighters have become obscenely high. [Continued on back]

“Most citizens have no idea what a sweet deal these public unions have – short work weeks, easy days, limited education required, huge salaries, etc. The front page of the Lancaster paper today details how the firefighters in Lancaster are harassing UNPAID volunteers who come into the city under a mutual aid arrangement. Disgusting.

“And the article quotes the union leadership as being unaware of who the harassers are. I was opposed at the time, but now believe [Charlie] Smithgall was correct when he wanted to disband the city fire department. If the only way to do this is to throw the city into bankruptcy and break these outrageous union contracts, then let’s do it.”

LETTER: Kill the State Store system root and branch

“We don’t even begin to approach convenience, or freedom for that matter, in the ways we can, or CANNOT, buy alcohol in our state. The system sucks!

“Not only should it be privatized at the retail end, but at the wholesale end as well. I understand that many of the so-called privatization plans would still have the state as the liquor wholesaler. This does not solve the problem.

“Kill the system, kill all parts of it. We should have a taxable, private liquor/beer/wine sales system at all levels of the supply chain and we should be able to buy wherever we want.

License, tax, and regulate it but break the unions “and get out of the way State of PA.”

INTELLIGENCER NEW ERA: In a letter to the editor entitled **“A right not to recite Pledge”**, David Merli cites a Supreme Court decision and observes: *“We citizens have the right to form our own opinions on these matters. The government can’t force orthodox views on us or ask*

us to leave if we have unpopular beliefs. The liberty protected by our Constitution and described so eloquently by the Supreme Court is far more precious than a rote recitation of the Pledge.”

WATCHDOG: A wag of the tail!

Aspirin Cuts Death Rates for Range of Cancers, Researchers Say

BLOOMBERG: Aspirin, a century-old medicine known to relieve pain and prevent blood clots, also reduces the risk of death from a variety of cancers, researchers said.

Taking 75 milligrams of aspirin a day for more than five years cut deaths from cancer by 20 percent, according to the study published in The Lancet medical journal today. The researchers found the pill was associated with a reduced risk of death from esophageal, colorectal, lung and prostate cancers.

The findings, based on data from eight trials involving 25,570 patients, expand on previous studies that found aspirin lowered the risk of colon cancer. More studies are needed before aspirin, which can increase the risk of internal bleeding, should be recommended for cancer prevention, said the researchers, led by Peter Rothwell, professor of clinical neurology at the John Radcliffe Hospital in Oxford, England...

EDITOR: *Since “baby aspirin” is already recommended for persons over fifty-five to prevent heart attacks and strokes, it’s a two for one.*

**The above have been excerpted from NewsLanc.com.
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