

Wednesday, May 16, 2007 3:40 PM

Email to Austin City Council members Mike Martinez, Lee Leffingwell, and Betty Dunkerley

RE: follow-up to 5-15-07 subcommittee meeting re electroshock

**Dear Councilmembers Leffingwell, Martinez and Dunkerley,**

**I appreciate your sincere interest in our concerns about psychiatric electroshock in Austin. Although we were not able to convince you of the clear and present danger of this brain-damaging procedure, I am grateful that you listened and began an inquiry into the issue. I also appreciate the research you did.**

**Councilmember Martinez told us that he had investigated the three healthcare insurance supports available for City of Austin employees, and that none of the three provided coverage for electroshock. As a community elder, I tend to think about protecting my family first, then the groups for which I am responsible. I like your instinct to check on whether the City was engaging with healthcare policies that supported people to receive electroshock. It would be appropriate to experience relief at the fact you are not. No matter what people's opinions are about electroshock it is a fact that it systematically causes brain damage, and that for the overwhelming majority of recipients it is not effective.**

**It was highly ironic that the agenda item just prior to electroshock was a presentation by a group of Akins High School students on prescription drug abuse. They laid out a few of the effects of these psychotropic drugs, some of which are the very symptoms for which electroshock is said to be indicated. A big part of my work is to challenge the incongruities and machinations necessary to acknowledge these students and the dangers they point out, while at the same time supporting the beliefs and practices of biological psychiatry. Our focus with the Coalition for the Abolition of Electroshock in Texas is not on psychotropic drugs, but it is a fact, as these young people accurately pointed out, that these drugs are dangerous. Electroshock is an even more dangerous treatment of next resort.**

**Once again, I thank you for including us in your committee hearings. We will keep you apprised of our actions in the community, including our next protest rally at Seton Shoal Creek. We very much appreciate your interest in the concept of medical wellness. We look forward to the day when Seton Shoal Creek Hospital, along with St. David's, voluntarily shuts down its electroshock program and pursues authentic, compassionate care.**

Sincerely,

**John Breeding, PhD  
Coalition for the Abolition of Electroshock in Texas  
[www.endofshock.com](http://www.endofshock.com)**