

COALITION FOR THE ABOLITION OF ELECTROSHOCK IN TEXAS
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January 2, 2007

Sister Helen Brewer
Chair, Seton Board of Trustees
3501 Mills Avenue
Austin, TX 78731

Dear Sister Brewer,

As the new year begins, we at the Coalition for the Abolition of Electroshock in Texas are deeply saddened that you and Seton continue to condone and practice electroshock treatment on the citizens of Austin and Central Texas. We are actively continuing to challenge your decision and to raise the issue in the community.

As you know, our view is clear that electroshock causes unnecessary brain damage and does not work. We provide evidence to support these assertions on our website, www.endofshock.com. Just now let me cite only two items.

Regarding efficacy, Dr. Colin Ross, a prominent Dallas psychiatrist, published an article last year reviewing the literature on so-called sham ECT (patients are told that they are receiving ECT; they go through all the preparations and follow-up, but really only get anesthesia without electroshock). In his article, "The Sham ECT Literature: Implications For Consent To ECT" (*Ethical Human Psychology and Psychiatry*, 8, 17-28, 2006), Dr. Ross conservatively concludes that "there is no demonstrated benefit from real ECT compared to sham ECT, except during the time the treatment is being administered [and that] even that difference is modest."

I have enclosed a brief article from *Medical News Today* about the second item, which is an article in the journal *Neuropsychopharmacology* in January 2007 by prominent researcher Harold Sackheim of Columbia University and his colleagues, titled "The Cognitive Effects of Electroconvulsive Therapy in Community Settings." This study provides more evidence that electroshock causes permanent amnesia and permanent deficits in cognitive abilities, which affect individuals' ability to function. Sackheim concludes his article as follows: "This study provides the first evidence in a large, prospective sample that adverse cognitive effects can persist for an extended period, and *that they characterize routine treatment with ECT in community settings.*" (italics are mine)

I appreciate the correspondence we have had. I would still like to sit down with you personally and discuss Seton's use of electroshock. I hope you will grant me a meeting.

Respectfully Yours,

John Breeding, PhD
Coalition for the Abolition of Electroshock in Texas

Editor's Note: The referenced Medical News Today article about Sackheim's article may be read at <http://www.ect.org/electroconvulsive-therapy-causes-permanent-amnesia-and-cognitive-deficits-prominent-researcher-admits/>

