

COALITION FOR THE ABOLITION OF ELECTROSHOCK IN TEXAS
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Austin, Texas 78745
(512) 799-3610

July 10, 2006

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

Dear Sister Brewer,

I appreciate your letting me know that the Seton Board of Trustees has decided to accept the Medical Executive Committee (MEC) recommendation to continue using electroshock on patients at Seton Shoal Creek Hospital. Although it is true that ECT is used throughout the country, that only underscores the inability of the medical community to look beyond "customary and usual" practice and into the harsh facts about electroshock and what it does to people. It is well to remember that not too long ago the infamous lobotomy operation was an accepted and widely used procedure throughout the United States and Europe. Consider also that at least 17 Texas hospitals stopped using ECT between 1994 and 2004, during the first 10 years of mandatory reporting data in the state. The state hospital system, other than at Terrell, has not done ECT for about 35 years.

I am deeply saddened that we have not yet been able to adequately convey to you the truth about electroshock. As a result, you and the Seton Board are allowing citizens of our community to receive a "treatment" that is no more helpful than pretending you are electroshocking somebody, and sends the patient home with brain damage to boot. Seton Shoal Creek has many better, safer options to offer people in psychological distress.

The MEC's conclusion that ECT is an essential option, while expected, is tragic. That is why we came to you and the Board in the first place and why it is necessary to continue our public action in the community.

I would still like to sit down with you personally and discuss a perspective on electroshock with which you may not be familiar. Perhaps we could include one or two doctors or psychiatrists so that their point of view can also be represented.

As you may know from my letter to the editor in response to the June 29th Daily Texan article about our recent protest at Seton Shoal Creek Hospital, we also invite you to join us in a public community forum or debate on the use of electroshock in Austin.

Respectfully Yours,

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

Cc Texas Representative Elliott Naishtat
Texas Representative Eddie Rodriguez
City Councilmember Betty Dunkerley

