

## The 2003 President's New Freedom Commission Executive Summary on Mental Health

- The New Freedom Commission on Mental Health was established by U.S. President George W. Bush through executive order 13263 on April 29, 2002 to conduct a comprehensive study of the U.S. mental health service delivery system and make recommendations based on its findings. The commission has been touted as part of his commitment to eliminate inequality for Americans with disabilities.
- The President directed the commission to identify policies that could be implemented by federal, state and local governments to maximize the utility of existing resources, improve coordination of treatments and services, and promote successful community integration for adults with a serious mental illness and children with a serious emotional disturbance. The commission, using the Texas Medication Algorithm Project (TMAP) as a blueprint, subsequently recommended screening of American adults for possible mental illnesses, and children for emotional disturbances, thereby identifying those with suspected disabilities who could then be provided with support services and state-of-the-art treatment, often in the form of newer psychoactive drugs that entered the market in recent years.
- A broad-based coalition of mental health consumers, families, providers, and advocates has supported the commission process and recommendations, using the commission's findings as a launching point for recommending widespread reform of the nation's mental health system.
- A coalition of opponents questioned the motives of the commission, based on the results from a similar 1995 Texas mandate while Bush was governor. during the Texas Medication Algorithm Project Mandate, psychotropic medication was wrongfully prescribed to the general public. specifically, TMAP and drug manufacturers marketed 'atypical antipsychotic drugs', such as Seroquel, Zyprexa, and others, for a wide variety of non-psychotic behavior issues. These drugs were later found to cause increased rates of sudden death in patients.
- In addition to atypical antipsychotic drugs, earlier versions of psychotropic medications, including Prozac, were found to sharply increase rates of suicide, especially during the first month of drug use. Also, during TMAP, psychotropic medication was wrongfully prescribed to people not suffering from mental illness, including troublesome children and difficult elderly people in nursing homes. In 2009, Eli Lilly was found guilty of wrongfully marketing Zyprexa for non-psychotic people.

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- Opponents also assert the New Freedom Initiative Campaign is a thinly veiled proxy for the pharmaceutical industry to foster psychotropic medication on mentally healthy individuals in its pursuit of profits. Opponents also contend that the initiative's wider objectives are to foster chemical behavior control of American citizens, contrary to civil liberties and to basic human rights.