

Attn: Medical Reporter / City/State Reporter

For Immediate Release

April 24, 2006

Press Release

Date and time: Monday, April 24, 2006, Noon to 1:00pm.

Location: Seider Springs Park, South side of 38th, East side of Shoal Creek, adjacent to Seton Shoal Creek Hospital, Austin, Texas.

Contact: John Breeding, PhD

Coalition for the Abolition of Electroshock in Texas (512) 799-3610

e-mail: john@wildestcolts.com

Psychiatric Electroshock (ECT) in Austin:

A Rally to Protest Brain Damaging Electroshock at Seton Shoal Creek Hospital

April 24, 2006

Electroshock (electroconvulsive treatment, ECT) causes brain damage, memory loss, learning disability, seizures, and a small but significant number of deaths. Electroshock is not only a medical issue; it is a public safety issue; it is a human rights issue.

The Coalition for the Abolition of Electroshock in Texas (CAEST) sponsored a rally to draw attention to the practice of psychiatric electroshock in Austin. Seton Shoal Creek Hospital is one of the last facilities in Central Texas (Austin's St. David's hospital is another) that continues to use electroshock. According to the state's annual ECT facility summary, 163 of 1656 people electroshocked in Texas between September 2003 and August 2004 were Seton Shoal Creek patients. Approximately 2/3 were women, mostly of menopausal or perimenopausal age; 7 of the 163 were over 80.

Austin physician, Dr. Moira Dolan, director of the Medical Accountability Network, has reviewed the ECT literature and states, "It is unconscionable that physicians continue to inflict electroshock on their patients. The scientific literature documents that ECT causes brain damage and a host of other ill effects, and that it doesn't effect cures. ECT practice is a clear violation of medical ethics."

CAEST member, Dianna Loper, has written about the ECT-caused memory loss she experienced: "I had 28 ECTs in all. And when it was all over, I was not able to remember my own child's name. Some of the lost memories returned, but there were others that never did. I had to learn many things all over again; it took me 20 years to partially catch up to where I thought I had been before." Two CAEST members suffer permanent disability from the effects of ECT, including seizures and devastating memory loss.

CAEST member Gary Moore was electroshocked 24 times at Shoal Creek in less than 8 months. He suffers permanent disability he believes to be from the effects of ECT, including seizures. It is a tragic irony that psychiatrists deliberately induce seizures in patients when for more than 2,000 years physicians have been trying to prevent the seizure disorder known as epilepsy. As a result of ECT, Gary Moore and another CAEST member, Dianna Loper will have to live the rest of their lives with this disorder. Ms. Loper has written about the ECT-caused memory loss she experienced: "I had 28 ECTs in all. And when it was all over, I was not able to remember my own child's name. Some of the lost memories returned, but there were others that never did. I had to learn many things all over again; it took me 20 years to partially catch up to where I thought I had been before."

John Breeding, PhD, spokesperson for CAEST, said, "We have been in dialogue with Shoal Creek Medical Director, Dr. Paul Whitelock, who is reviewing materials we sent him on ECT. The chair of the Seton Board, Sister Helen Brewer, has thus far refused to meet with us. It is a shame and a disgrace that our primary city hospital for mental health care administers brain-damaging treatment. The people of Austin need to be and are entitled to protection from this harmful procedure."

Speaking at the rally will be John Breeding, PhD, Lee Spiller, Director of the Citizens Commission on Human Rights, Allen Davisson of Texas Health Freedom, and others.