

DCA supplier defends drug sales

DCA • CONTINUED FROM PAGE 1

Despite complications that may arise due to a lethal reaction between existing cancer medications and the DCA compound, Tassano said people are purchasing DCA from his site because they can't get it elsewhere, and it's their last hope.

"Dr Michelakis has essentially shut off Canadian supplies, and it is not available for veterinary use anywhere. I had a guy tell me when he tried to buy DCA for his dog, the supplier basically told him to get lost," Tassano said.

Tassano went on to say that side effects of human DCA use arise when high rates are used over long periods.

"Who wouldn't try a therapy that might decimate their tumor for 90 cents a day and have no observable side effects? Especially when they have been declared terminally ill," he said.

Although it's too early to tell what effect DCA has had on his customers, Tassano said he sees hope in the forthcoming possibility of clinical trials testing the compound on humans with cancer, because Michelakis and his team have already completed the first two phases of testing by giving it to humans with metabolic disorders.

"It has been used on humans in

many tests. That is why Dr Michelakis can skip phase-one studies. DCA is being used in phase-three studies already," Tassano said.

"All businesses must be run for a profit. That was an issue I had to wrestle with at the beginning of this."

JIM TASSANO

Michelakis was quoted in a previous article by *Edmonton Journal* health writer, Jodie Sinnema, as having said that when these DCA trials were performed on adults with metabolic diseases, many had developed severe peripheral neuropathy; damage to their peripheral nerves caused imbalance and finger numbness, and had to discontinue its [DCA's] use.

Even though these side effects are detrimental, Tassano stressed that they are minute when compared to those of chemotherapy.

"Dr Michelakis stated on television that 'when you take chemotherapy, you get nauseated because the drug

kills the stomach cells, or your heart cells dysfunction because the drug kills your heart cells, or your skin, or you lose your hair.' None of these things appear to be affected by DCA," Tassano said.

But along with Michelakis, a large number of health professionals have shunned Tassano and his website due to the moral implications of his actions; an issue even Tassano has struggled with.

"All businesses must be run for a profit. That was an issue I had to wrestle with at the beginning of this," Tassano said. "I realized that it had to be that way. Major pharmaceutical companies showed no interest in developing DCA because there is no profit in it. Whoever sells DCA must make a profit, or there will be no incentive."

But despite harsh criticisms, Tassano remains loyal to his belief that the decision to take DCA should be up to the individual, and not the government.

"I see two paths that we as a society must take. One is the long and proper process of clinical trials. However, those people who cannot survive following that path must be allowed an alternate path, one of personal choice."

NEWS BRIEF

Written by Kate Redfern

EFFECTS OF PARKLAND STRIKE ON STUDENTS REMAINS TO BE SEEN

The Parkland School District strike, which began on 16 February and kept students out of class for a month before teachers and the school board agreed to arbitration, has some questioning whether students will be ready for their final exams come June. However, others maintain that teachers had a right to hold the strike.

"The two big issues are salary and working conditions. For every hour in front of classes, teachers usually spend another hour preparing," said Frank Bruseker, President of the Alberta Teachers' Association.

Bruseker believes strongly in teachers' right to strike and doesn't feel that teachers are an "essential service" in the same way that firefighters or police officers are. The extended nature of the strike has some parents rallying to restrict teachers from striking, but limiting the time allowed to strike doesn't sit well with him.

"You can't put in legislation that says you can only strike for two or three weeks," Bruseker said, predicting that school boards would simply wait the teachers out.

But after a month of classes lost, some

wonder how students facing Provincial Achievement Tests and Diploma exams will fare on their in June.

"One month is quite a bit of time for kids to be out of school," said third-year education student Rachel Tomalty. "So it's not very fair for them. But on the other side, teachers could be saying that their contract isn't very fair. There's no easy way to come to an agreement that pleases both sides."

"It shouldn't have got to go that long, but it had to happen," Jana Nehring, President of the University of Alberta's Education Students Association said. "[This] is going to push students behind and it's going to affect the next year."

Several other school districts are approaching the time to renew contracts and Nehring predicts there will be more strikes coming up over the next year.

Bruseker agreed that more strikes are on the horizon.

"There are two more locals that have taken out strike notice—Buffalo Trail and Wild Rose."

Bruseker was confident that students writing PATs and Diplomas this year would still be well prepared, despite some questions about whether students can catch up after a month with no classes.

"I expect what teachers will do is stick to the core curriculum," he said, explaining that no supplemental material will be covered, but students will still be learning what they need to sit their exams.



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