from Leslie Feinberg August 2011 transgenderwarrior.org
my research notes on the medical politics driving the “Lyme Wars”

Part 5:
Gov’t, corporate drive for Lyme patent

Journalist Suzan Erem wrote, "A 2001 Lyme Disease Association report carefully details extensive conflict of interest potential in the development of a Lyme vaccine. Included in a long list is the Penn State Research Foundation, owner of a patent for a vaccine delivery system estimated to be worth $900 million per year." (voicesweb.org)

Erem concluded in 2010, "The vaccine industry is estimated to be worth more than $500 million to $1 billion per year in the United States alone, and charges of conflicts of interest have only increased over time."

Dr. Alan Steere is officially credited with first "identifying" Lyme disease in the U.S.

Wikipedia notes, "As chief of the rheumatology and immunology department at Tufts School of Medicine, Steere led the research effort on Lymerix, the preventive Lyme vaccine by SmithKline Beecham, now GlaxoSmithKline (GSK), which first appeared on the market in January 1999."

The Newark [New Jersey] Star Ledger reported on May 13, 2001: "Patents sought for diagnosing Lyme disease are being investigated. One example involved a 1992 patent application filed jointly by the CDC and SmithKline, which Glaxo purchased.”

Two years after the patent application was filed, the Newark Star Ledger reported,"[T]he CDC issued a public health notice recommending doctors rely on two of the same diagnostic markers listed in the patent, but never disclosed the agency stood to gain if the patent eventually was licensed and royalties were paid.

Shortly thereafter, Dr. Steere published a highly-publicized article titled, "The Over diagnosis of Lyme Disease," in the Journal of the [North] American Medical Association (JAMA), Dr. Joseph Burrascano wrote a dissenting letter to JAMA in response."

Science author Pamela Weintraub wrote, "Burrascano complained that Steere ignored guidelines that Lyme be diagnosed clinically, based on signs and symptoms, not blood tests. Instead, Steere seemed to render diagnoses based largely on serology--but only with tests run at his lab.

"To resolve the matter once and for all," Weintraub stated, a conference was set. "[T]he CDC and the Association of State and Territorial Public Health Laboratory Directors (ASTPHLD) co-hosted the Second National Conference on Lyme Disease Testing, in Dearborn, Michigan, in October 1994."

Weintraub explained: "The goal was to select a new blood test standard to aid in the

diagnosis of Lyme disease." She noted that the endorsement of "new, even narrower criteria at the meeting" resulted in leaving even more patients than ever before "outside the diagnostic gate." ("Cure Unknown: Inside the Lyme Epidemic." St. Martin's Griffin, New York: 2008; pp. 204-205)

The Newark, New Jersey, "Star-Ledger" pointed out, "As it turned out, Barbara Johnson, a CDC employee who also was listed as an inventor on the patent, was a member of the conference planning committee. She also was involved in setting the agenda for the meeting, according to a conference organizer." (May 13, 2001)

Next: U.S. gov't allows Big Pharma giant to shape Lyme diagnosis