



Cancer Prevention Coalition

Fighting for a safer environment at home, in the community, and at work

*Publications
and Resources*

Cancer-Gate: How to Win the Losing Cancer War by Samuel S. Epstein, M.D.

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*With a Foreword by Congressman David Obey and
Introduction by Congressman John Conyers*

Award-winning author, Samuel S. Epstein, M.D., whose 1978 book *The Politics of Cancer* shook the political establishment by showing how the federal government had been corrupted by industrial polluters, has written a book that is sure to be of equal consequence. *Cancer-Gate: How to Win The Losing Cancer War* is a groundbreaking new book. It warns that, contrary to three decades of promises, we are losing the winnable war against cancer, and that the hand-in-glove generals of the federal National Cancer Institute (NCI) and the private “nonprofit” American Cancer Society (ACS) have betrayed us. These institutions, Epstein alleges, have spent tens of billions of taxpayer and charity dollars primarily targeting silver-bullet cures, strategies that have largely failed, while virtually ignoring strategies for preventing cancer in the first place. As a result, cancer rates have escalated to epidemic proportions, now striking nearly one in every two men, and more than one in every three women. This translates into approximately 50 percent more cancer in men, and 20 percent more cancer in women over the course of just one generation.

According to Epstein, these failed strategies are largely due to institutional malaise and outdated mindsets fixated on treatment, to the virtual exclusion of prevention, other than quitting smoking. But, Epstein says, there is much more. In particular, the book shows how the NCI and ACS are corroded with major institutional and personal conflicts of interest with cancer drug companies (“Big Pharma”). As candidly admitted by a recent NCI director, the NCI has become a “government pharmaceutical company.” For the ACS, these conflicts extend to environmental polluters in the chemical industry, and connivance in white collar crime. Not surprisingly, *The Chronicle of Philanthropy* has charged that “the ACS is more interested in accumulating wealth than saving lives.” These close ties to industry have transformed the NCI and ACS into cheerleaders for special interests rather than stewards of the public interest.

Astoundingly, and for the first time, Epstein chronicles how the NCI and ACS are sitting on mountains of information about avoidable environmental causes of cancer rather than making this available to the public in any systematic and understandable way. This silence has even extended to frank suppression of such information, denial of the public’s right to know, and violation of human rights.

Following a detailed indictment of these public betrayals, Epstein explains how we can “take back” the war against cancer with a wide range of strategies. These include “right-to-know” laws, ensuring public dissemination of critical information on

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environmental carcinogens and avoidable causes of cancer, and legislative reforms and oversight to ensure that the NCI protects the public rather than special interests.

This searing exposé of the NCI and ACS, and the proposed reforms of public policy have been endorsed by over a hundred leading independent experts in cancer prevention and public health, as well as by activist citizen groups.

The Losing War

- Since President Nixon launched the 1971 cancer war, cancer incidence rates (adjusted for the aging population) have escalated to epidemic proportions.
- Contrary to NCI and ACS claims, the escalating incidence of cancer cannot be explained away by smoking, but is due to avoidable exposures to a multiplicity of environmental carcinogens. And, while lung cancer rates have declined steadily, rates for a wide range of cancers unrelated to smoking have increased sharply.
- These alarming statistics do not reflect a lack of resources. Since 1971, NCI's budget has increased 30-fold, from \$150 million to \$4.6 billion; annual revenues of ACS have now reached \$800 million. Paradoxically, it seems that the more money we spend on cancer, the more cancer we get.
- Meanwhile, and in spite of the NCI/ACS's overwhelming expenditures on an ongoing series of claimed miracle cancer drugs, overall cancer mortality rates have remained essentially unchanged for more than three decades. In fact, as recently admitted by a Nobel Laureate director of an NCI Comprehensive Cancer Center, most of NCI's resources are spent on promoting ineffective drugs for terminal disease.
- These statistics are also in striking contrast to three decades of highly publicized and frankly misleading promises by the NCI and ACS of drastic reductions in cancer incidence, "turning the corner in the cancer war," and dramatic breakthroughs in treatment.

How to Win the War

By calling for an end to the "cancer plutocracy" and a return to public health democracy, Epstein outlines a wide range of reforms that could save hundreds of thousands, if not millions, of lives. These include:

- Reforming the NCI and ACS : *Cancer-Gate* lays out systematic reforms, including a requirement that NCI's cancer prevention programs be placed on an equal budgetary footing with all its other programs combined. *Cancer-Gate* also proposes the creation of a National Cancer Prevention Registry—a clearing-house freely available to the public in print and on-line—for all known chemical and radioactive carcinogens (similar to NCI's freely available registry of cancer drugs and treatment), as NCI has already pledged the U.S. Congress. *Cancer-Gate* also argues that the "nonprofit" ACS must end its corrupting dependency on special interest "soft-money" financial contributions, or risk public boycott of its funding.
- The Right-to-Know : *Cancer-Gate* insists that the public's right-to-know be validated by requiring the NCI to disseminate information about known carcinogens in the environment and consumer products, as required by the 1971 National Cancer Act. Epstein also argues that consumers have the basic right-to-know, through explicit labeling, of known carcinogens in consumer products—food, cosmetics and personal care products, and household

products. Additionally, patients have the basic right to be informed by their health care professionals of the carcinogenic risks of prescription drugs (and the availability of safe alternatives), and of screening and diagnostic medical procedures, particularly high X-ray dose CAT scans. *Cancer-Gate* also calls on state and local governments to utilize public databases to inform local citizenries about carcinogenic hazards posed by chemical industries in their communities. State and local governments should also be required to develop ordinances to obtain such information, and should develop remedial initiatives to prevent hazardous exposures to industrial carcinogens.

- [A Wake-up Call for Congress](#): *Cancer-Gate* charges that Congress has been asleep at the wheel in the cancer war and has shirked oversight of the cancer establishment. *Cancer-Gate* proposes that Congress should use the budget process to ensure that cancer prevention, particularly from environmental causes, be given the highest priority, and that NCI is reigned in from its current independent “rogue status” and is made directly accountable to the director of the National Institutes of Health, as are some 25 other National Health Institutes. The book also urges Congress to schedule regular oversight hearings to monitor NCI’s progress in preventing environmental cancers, and its related belated implementation of a comprehensive registry of environmental carcinogens.
- [Taking Matters Into Your Own Hands](#): Finally, *Cancer-Gate* tells you—the reader—how you can fight back by arming yourself with information that you need to protect yourself from everyday carcinogens by shopping for safe organic foods, cosmetics, and other consumer products, and how to become an activist in the war against cancer.

About the author: Dr. Epstein is Professor Emeritus of Environmental and Occupational Medicine at the School of Public Health, University of Illinois at Chicago, and Chairman of the Cancer Prevention Coalition. He is an internationally recognized authority on the causes and prevention of cancer, and has published some 270 scientific articles and 11 books, including the prize-winning The Politics of Cancer (1978), The Safe Shopper’s Bible (1995), The Breast Cancer Prevention Program and The Politics of Cancer Revisited (both 1998). Dr. Epstein is the recipient of many prizes and awards, including the 2005 Schweitzer Golden Grand Medal for Humanitarianism, and a member of the National Writers Union, AFL-CIO, and the National Association of Science Writers.

This book is the latest in Baywood’s highly regarded Policy, Politics, Health and Medicine Series, edited by Dr. Vicente Navarro.

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ENDORSEMENTS

Dr. Epstein penetrates the facades of the huge cancer institutions and organizations, and explodes the myth that they are protecting us from

cancer causing agents. In Cancer-Gate, he demonstrates that he is a fearless fighter in the battle against environmental carcinogens.

-- Ruth Winter, Past President of the American Society of Journalists and Authors

Relentlessly, and with meticulous documentation, Dr. Epstein updates us on the unresponsiveness of the National Cancer Institute and American Cancer Society to avoidable causes of cancer. His urgent message--stop cancer before it starts--is daily more imperative and must be heeded. **A must for every public health student and professional.**

-- Quentin D. Young, M.D., Chairman, Health and Medicine Policy Research Group, Chicago, and Past President, American Public Health Association

Epstein is a legend in the field of cancer prevention. From his prize-winning 1978 *The Politics of Cancer* through his latest brilliant work *Cancer-Gate*, Epstein demonstrates a clear understanding of the cancer crisis and the only real solution--cancer prevention. This year, 1,400,000 Americans will be diagnosed with cancer and 600,000 will die. If we had taken Epstein's advice on cancer prevention 30 years ago we would not be facing this tragedy today.

-- Frank D. Wiewel, Founder, People Against Cancer

Cancer has surpassed heart disease as America's #1 killer, but the National Cancer Institute and American Cancer Society continue to hope that "magic bullet" drugs will save us. For over three decades, Prof. Samuel Epstein has shown that many kinds of cancer can be prevented by simply phasing out or eliminating carcinogens in the air, food, water and workplace.

Vested interests have blocked this strategy. **Epstein is a national treasure and his *Cancer-Gate* is simply magnificent--a battle cry for activists to reclaim the failing war against cancer.**

-- Ralph W. Moss, PhD, Director, The Moss Reports, and author *The Cancer Industry*, 2000

Professor Epstein's scientifically-accurate, yet highly-readable, book is an extraordinarily important depiction of the failure of President Nixon's 1971 "War on Cancer."

This has been due to concentration on highly questionable treatment, and monumental neglect of preventing environmental and other avoidable causes of cancer. Like the "War on Terrorism," which has been sidetracked into a war on Iraq and on human rights, the "War on Cancer" has enriched powerful special interests, and stifled the free flow of public information. This book provides recommendations and inspiration for at-long-last transforming the largely futile, and inflationary, cancer war into realistic strategies to prevent the nation's leading cause of suffering and premature death.

--Victor W. Sidel, M.D.

Distinguished University Professor of Social Medicine
Montefiore Medical Center/Albert Einstein College of Medicine, Bronx,
NY, and Past President, American Public Health Association

There is less and less effort to inform workers and their families, and the public about avoidable environmental and occupational causes of cancer.

This book will make you pause and think—especially if you or a loved one has cancer.

--Eula Bingham, Ph.D., Professor Emerita of Environmental Health,
University of Cincinnati Medical Center, Cincinnati, Ohio, and Former
Assistant Secretary of Labor, Occupational Safety and Health
Administration

As *Cancer-Gate* details, the National Cancer Institute and American Cancer Society have narrowly focused their policies and resources on promoting highly profitable Big Pharma "miracle" drugs in largely unsuccessful efforts to cure cancer. **What's more, in defiance of the Human Rights Covenants, they have denied the public of its right to know of available information on the causes and prevention of cancer.**

--Dr. Rosalie Bertell, Former President of the International Institute of Concern for Public Health, and Member of the National Association for Public Health Policy, International Science Oversight Committee

Dr. Epstein is a scientist/scholar/activist who devotes his life 24/7 to informing the public about what really causes cancer, and how we can protect ourselves. In his brilliant and compelling book, in spite of the silence of the National Cancer Institute (NCI) and attacks by industry, he

has established guidelines on the public's undeniable right-to-know of avoidable causes of cancer in the environment, workplace, hormone replacement therapy and other prescription drugs, and consumer products.

--Barbara Seaman, Co-Founder, National Women's Health Network, and author *The Doctor's Case Against the Pill*

Dr. Epstein's factual exposé of the National Cancer Institute and American Cancer Society—their conflicts of interest, co-option by the pharmaceutical and petrochemical industries, and indifference to cancer prevention—is riveting. Dr. Epstein reaches for the law to turn the issue of public health into one of human rights. **This book belongs on the bookshelf of every lawyer and teacher of environmental law or public health, in every law library, and on the reading lists of all related law school classes.**

--George S. Grossman, Professor of Law and Director of the Law Library University of California, Davis

Cancer-Gate is **Dr. Epstein's heroic efforts to show us how to reduce our risks of cancer.** Motivated by compassion and concern, he does not fail to deeply impress. In both print and film, he is as remarkable in command of scientific data as ability to present them in a way that is both convincing to the public health community and accessible to the general public. He has shared these powerful insights in my recent documentary, *The Corporation*.

--Mark Achbar, Executive Producer, and Co-Director, *The Corporation*, recipient of 22 international awards

Dr. Epstein's new masterpiece *Cancer-Gate* takes the onus from industry that tries to keep us in the dark about the war on cancer and puts the information right into our hands. This well researched book

acts as a roadmap showing what is being done and what can be done regarding the war on cancer. The importance of becoming proactive becomes even more personal as Dr. Epstein reveals the role that the cosmetics industry plays in the cancer epidemic in my forthcoming documentary "America the Beautiful."

--Darryl Roberts, Producer, Sensory Overload Productions

