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Via email

To the Board and Officers of the Wikimedia Foundation:

Since nearly its inception, the Wikimedia Foundation has supported individuals and groups who have been aggressively engaged in a systematic campaign against almost all fields of complementary, integrative and alternative medicine. Constructive and positive data about these disciplines are ignored. Similarly the observable malice against these medical systems has extended to pre-meditated, biased and personal attacks against living persons practicing and/or advocating these very same medical systems and theories. This has contributed to the creation of biographies of living persons, without their permission or consent. These biographies target specifically many prominent doctors and individuals within the complementary and alternative health field. For years administrative editors have relied upon sources, including discredited ones, which reflect personal opinions contrary to Wikipedia's rules on reliable sources, such as Quackwatch and the bloggers of Science Based Medicine. The most prominent individuals cited are Stephen Barrett, Victor Herbert, Steven Novella, Harriet Hall and David Gorski.

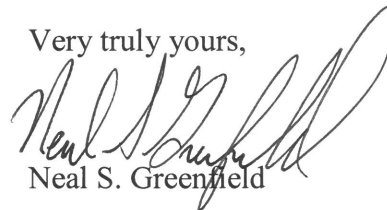
Unfortunately, efforts by individuals to edit their biographies or requests to be deleted from the encyclopedia altogether are thwarted outright. Many of those who have been victimized by conspiratorial prejudices of Wikipedia editors to censure alternative medicine, such as Drs. Deepak Chopra, Larry Dossey, Gary Null, David Perlmutter, etc., have had their livelihoods adversely affected with no due process. The attorneys representing the Wikimedia Foundation argue that no litigation could succeed because of the protections in the federal Communication Decency Act. Consequently, everyone we have spoken with who has been victimized on the encyclopedia, some who have attempted legal measures, has provided us with information regarding their failures to have misleading statements and even outright lies corrected or removed.

The general public, the mainstream media, members of Congress and the IRS have been unaware of the Foundation's support of these actions. Our investigations have focused on unveiling a concerted conspiracy by Jimmy Wales and the Foundation, and a gross violation of the rules that protect its non-profit status. During the past two years, we have released over 50 fully-documented articles largely focusing on medical and health issues. However, now Wikipedia has expanded beyond alternative medicine in its bias and propaganda and is doing the same in politics. We conservatively estimate that over half million doctors and alternative therapists have had their careers adversely affected because Wikipedia's misleading information on these medical modalities.

A careful, objective review of the scientific literature offers an abundance of support to the very therapies Wikipedia condemns. Tens of millions of patients visit non-conventional physicians and therapies annually with positive results. Today, we are providing examples from within Wikipedia's recent discussion noticeboard regarding Dr. Gary Null and in the context of whether Quackwatch is a reliable source to reference. Comments have been highlighted that clearly note bias and an adversarial position towards Dr. Null. These are not our statements but those of Wikipedia editors who Jimmy Wales has given evidence of support towards in the past.

Again, we are placing the Foundation on notice for being in violation of its non-profit status and the promises made to Congress by the very laws the Foundation claims to abide by. Clearly this does not matter to the Board. But imagine the number of people around the world who suffer and perhaps have died because of the irresponsible and erroneous information being promulgated on Wikipedia. And evidently, in its silence and failure to be held accountable, the Board fully supports deleterious activity.

Very truly yours,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Neal S. Greenfield', with a large, sweeping flourish extending from the end of the name.

Neal S. Greenfield

Examples Displaying Editorial Bias and Wrong Accusations Based Solely on Personal Opinions

(Most noted text is in **bold** for emphasis)

We've been having this exact discussion about this exact article for over a decade, for the exact same reason: Null demanding that QuackWatch be removed, issuing legal threats demanding that, and sending people here to argue for it. The conclusion is always the same: **QuackWatch is a reliable source for discussion of quacks and quackery.** [Guy](#) ([help!](#)) 23:04, 2 November 2019 (UTC)

Describing Quackwatch as 'peer reviewed' threatens to degrade the concept of [peer review](#). The site currently has no public peer review policy, editorial policy, or ombudsman; together, this typically indicates lower quality and reliability. Along with the indications that this is largely the work of Barrett himself with little outside input, describing this site as a SPS or personal blog seems more accurate than describing it as 'peer reviewed'. [Dialectric](#) ([talk](#)) 19:52, 4 November 2019 (UTC)

It is not peer reviewed according to the Wikipedia article on [Quackwatch](#). From the article (**emphasis** added): "input from advisors and help from volunteers, ... Many more have since volunteered, but **advisor names are no longer listed.** ... He said **a peer review process would improve the site's legitimacy.**" -- [Timeshifter](#) ([talk](#)) 15:28, 10 November 2019 (UTC)

I take issue with removing Quackwatch because there is a larger picture here. **If we start removing reliable skeptical websites like Quackwatch from Wikipedia because it is apparently a self-published source, then this will also effect other valid skeptical sources.** [Robert Todd Carroll](#) owner of a website [Skeptics Dictionary](#) which is similar to his book [The Skeptic's Dictionary](#). Have a little search for the Skeptics Dictionary (skeptdic.com) on Wikipedia. The source has been used many times on articles for deceased and living people in relation to their pseudoscientific claims. Are you saying we should remove this source as well? Brian Dunning's [Skeptoid](#) website is also used many times on Wikipedia in regarding to living people's claims. I do not believe we should be removing any of these sources. [81.147.137.6](#) ([talk](#)) 16:41, 31 October 2019 (UTC)

[SarahSV](#), you forget that we are not discussing legitimate "fields" of scientific endeavor. You wrote: "'expert' means an expert in the field under discussion, not a generic scientist." If the field is a legitimate scientific "field", then that certainly applies, but the "field" of *quackery and health fraud detection and exposure* is a very different animal. **The pseudoscientific "experts" in the "fields" of quackery they practice are sometimes simplistic true believers, but they are also often sneaky criminals.**

To understand this, look at the endeavors to expose counterfeit money. **The real expert is the trained federal agent (Barrett, [Doc James](#), and other trained physicians and scientists), not the counterfeiter ([Gary Null](#), [Samuel Hahnemann](#), [Hulda Clark](#), [Max Gerson](#), etc.).** They know the basic principles of science and can recognize BS when they see it. Experts like Barrett and [James Randi](#) take this to the next level. They have so much experience dealing with quackery that they also recognize the various types of tricks that quacks use in their claims and practices, tricks which can often fool the ordinary physician or scientist. So these people are experts in the

"real thing" AND the "fake thing". It's true that "[Training in identifying counterfeit currency begins with studying genuine money](#)", but it goes much further, and that's why we can't depend on ordinary doctors as experts in quackery, and why Barrett's expertise is so valued by federal and consumer protection agencies. His books are valued classics. -- [BullRangifer](#) ([talk](#)) 16:40, 3 November 2019 (UTC)

Disclaimer: I started to copyedit the Gary Null article which I do see is using Quackwatch as a source. I will not be editing sources on that article. **However, use of Quackwatch in a BLP article is a policy violation.** Especially, as editors, we have to be diligent if we dislike the living person, do not respect him or her and worse. We must be the ones who are neutrally driven knowing Wikipedia is not the place to "pay back" the subject of the article, alert the reader, nor do we have the right to attempt to destroy a reputation. It's very, very simple. The source is not compliant. If there are other compliant sources for the same content why would we even consider a non-compliant source. [Littleolive oil](#) ([talk](#)) 18:34, 5 November 2019 (UTC)

If a Fringe source cannot be identified as fringe except through reference to Quackwatch or other [WP:SPS](#) sources, [WP:FRINGE](#) would suggest the page should be deleted. I know there's a strong sentiment against "wikipedia is silent on this issue" **WRT quacks and pseudo-medical cons**, but otoh, an encyclopedia is not a clearinghouse of all information everywhere, and not every quack needs an article here exposing their quackery. [Simonm223](#) ([talk](#)) 14:17, 1 November 2019 (UTC)

BullRangifer's admission of association with Quackwatch strongly suggests conflict of interest despite his claims.

[Quackwatch](#) and I have been vindicated by the Arbitration Committee:

- As a result of this "[Request to amend prior case: Wikipedia:Requests for arbitration/Barrett v. Rosenthal](#)": The amendment removed the false charge against me of having used "unreliable" sources (QW), and it vindicated QW by removing the description of it as being "unreliable". Justice was finally done after two years! Note that only the second motion (1.1) passed.
- [RS/N: Usage of Quackwatch as RS in medical quackery](#): The consensus is that it may be used as a source under the same rules and precautions that govern the use of any other RS. It is an obviously notable source that is highly regarded by the mainstream (no criticisms) and villified by the fringe/alternative side, which is to be expected -- it exposes their unscientific practices, scams, and other illegal activities.

Do I have a [COI](#) with regard to [Quackwatch](#) and [Stephen Barrett](#)? No. [A shared POV is not a COI](#). Having sent a few emails to Barrett and received no or unpleasant responses does not create a COI. I have never had anything to do with the website, and it's been over 12 years since I had anything to do with, or any contact with, a healthfraud discussion group or Barrett.

Source:

https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/User:BullRangifer#Vindicated_regarding_AE_case_and_Quackwatch!

QuackWatch is a reliable source, cited by government websites and other authorities. it is not solely the work of one person, and even if it was there is no blanket prohibition on use of self-published sources in biographies - if we applied a "no third party self-published sources" rule and decided that QuackWatch is self-published we would arrive at the absurd situation where Null's claims could be repeated from his own mouth without rebuttal, since the reality-based community largely ignores him. We are being lectured on policy by [User:Зенитная Самоходная Установка](#) on the basis of their whopping 2,131 edits, and they came here because they read about this *on Gary Null's website*. Which is also where the earlier nontrovery was stirred up. **Null tried to sue WMF to have this material removed a decade ago, the case was dismissed. He's recently started sending legal threats to editors. The cynic in me would think he has a publicity drive coming up and wants to purge Wikipedia of reality-based commentary on his activities.**

M Quacks and charlatans hate QuackWatch. They have been demanding its removal from Wikipedia for as long as I've been here. The normal policy is to ignore them. I suggest we apply that now. [Guy](#) ([help!](#)) 23:14, 1 November 2019 (UTC)

So basically what's going to need to happen is that [Gary Null](#) meets Jimbo at a cocktail party and makes a compelling case to him that his biography unfairly portrays him as a quack and therefore needs to be drastically truncated or deleted. But maybe those two don't attend the same cocktail parties, so such a chance meeting wouldn't happen, and even if it did, it's not like Gary is a celebrity.

Isn't there a [Wikipedia:BLP ombudsman](#) around here? No? **I guess Jimbo is the *de facto* BLP ombudsman, since he's the only one who really has the clout to go against the administrative establishment in cases like this.** If you really want to ensure the highest standards for BLPs, there has to be someone with authority to take action even in the absence of community consensus to enforce the BLP rules; and that would have to either be someone appointed by the WMF, or some elected position, or someone designated by the ArbCom, or something. [Зенитная Самоходная Установка](#) ([talk](#)) 21:39, 1 November 2019 (UTC)

[Зенитная Самоходная Установка](#), Guy is right. That is **extremely** unlikely to happen, **especially** from Jimbo:

Wikipedia does not cater to what [Jimmy Wales](#) calls "lunatic charlatans":

Quote: "No, you have to be kidding me. Every single person who signed this petition needs to go back to check their premises and think harder about what it means to be honest, factual, truthful. Wikipedia's policies around this kind of thing are exactly spot-on and correct. If you can get your work published in respectable scientific journals - that is to say, if you can produce evidence through replicable scientific experiments, then Wikipedia will cover it appropriately. What we won't do is pretend that the work of lunatic charlatans is the equivalent of 'true scientific discourse'. It isn't." — [Jimbo Wales](#), March 23, 2014

We do not allow [advocacy](#) of fringe points of view, so the fact that fringe believers don't like these articles shows that we must be doing something right. -- [BullRanger](#) ([talk](#)) 23:29, 1 November 2019 (UTC)

The only "oversight" documented on QW is a legal team (who aren't even named) to handle those potential issues. **Barrett's team of volunteers are anonymous so we have no idea who they are.** --[MASEM](#) ([t](#)) 18:14, 3 November 2019 (UTC)

The fundamental problem is that the reality-based world pays very little attention to Null and his work, but he is **widely perceived as a dangerous proponent of nonsense due to the pervasive nature of his claims** (e.g. the fraudulent "death by medicine" trope that medical malpractice is the third leading cause of death in America and his promotion of the equally fraudulent [Burzynski Clinic](#)). **He is considered significant by charlatans and skeptics, and pretty much nobody else, on the face of it.** [Guy](#) ([help!](#)) 11:33, 4 November 2019 (UTC)

[BullRangifer](#), I am annoyed by the fact that this entire debate has been prompted by a quack sending his followers here often enough that eventually a few good editors who err on the side of fairness towards cranks and charlatans (IMO sometimes to excess) have been sucked in. We can't have articles on quacks and charlatans that exclude the leading reality-based sources on quackery. [Guy](#) ([help!](#)) 17:47, 5 November 2019 (UTC)

Only if you believe that using Wikipedia as a platform to debunk pseudomedicine is more important than our BLP policy. **Also, I've never understood why it's necessary to [WP:LABEL](#) things quackery, when we could simply say that they're not supported by scientific evidence.** In fact, [WP:BLPSTYLE](#) seem quite clear on that point. - [MrX](#) □ 17:17, 10 November 2019 (UTC)