

# CCHR Led Hundreds of Protestors Outside Psychiatric Convention Demanding a Ban on Electroshock Treatment

*Human rights group loudly speaks out for nationwide ban on “torturous” electroshock treatment given 0-5 year olds, pregnant women, elderly, veterans...*

CLEARWATER, FLORIDA, UNITED STATES, May 21, 2019

/EINPresswire.com/ -- Members of the mental health watchdog, [Citizens Commission on Human Rights](#) (CCHR) and others concerned about the continuing use of [electroshock](#) treatment on 100,000 Americans each year—some aged five or younger [1] marched through the streets of San Francisco on Saturday, May 18, to the Moscone convention center where the annual meeting of the American Psychiatric Association (APA) was held.

They loudly chanted for the end of electroshock—the passage of up to 460 volts of electricity through the brain causing a grand mal seizure that can result in permanent memory loss and brain damage. CCHR reports that several psychiatrists crossed sides to join the protest, giving a “thumbs up” for a ban and agreeing with placards saying electroshock is “torture, not therapy.”



CCHR spokesperson for the march, Rev. Frederick Shaw said the protest was needed given the fact that pregnant women, children and the elderly are being electroshocked.

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Electroshock causes harm, creates brain damage and ruins lives. CCHR has been documenting this for 50 years and we want to see an end to physically damaging practices in the field of mental health.”

*Jan Eastgate, President of CCHR International*

CCHR spokesperson for the march, Rev. Frederick Shaw, a former Los Angeles County Sheriff Deputy and current Executive Director of the Inglewood South Bay branch of The National Association for the Advancement of Colored People (NAACP), said the protest was needed given the fact that pregnant women, children and the elderly are being electroshocked. He specified that the Food and Drug Administration (FDA) has never demanded shock device manufacturers provide clinical studies to prove the device is safe and effective, and have left them on the market despite one of the manufacturers conceding last year that ECT could cause permanent brain damage. [2]

Following the protest and addressing the opening of CCHR’s world acclaimed Traveling Exhibit on the history of psychiatry’s harmful treatments and abuses, Shaw spoke of a national NAACP Resolution obtained in 2017 that is critical of ECT’s use, especially in children, adolescents and young adults. Jan Eastgate, President of CCHR International spoke of how CCHR helped obtain the precedent California law in 1976 that bans electroshock treatment on children and

adolescents. "This ban needs to be expanded to all age groups and worldwide," Eastgate added, "because electroshock causes harm, electroshock creates brain damage and electroshock ruins lives. CCHR has been documenting this for 50 years. We are the voice of patients and families who want to see an end to physically damaging practices in the field of mental health."

CCHR has already collected more than 68,600 signatures on a [petition supporting a ban](#).

Other speakers included James Sweeney, Political Liaison for the Black American Political Association of California (BAPAC) and Founder and Managing General Partner of Sweeney and Associates, an advocacy and consulting firm. He also supported a ban on ECT and talked about the history of psychiatry's racism. Emceeding the Exhibit opening was Fran Andrews, the executive director of CCHR International, joined by Lee Spiller, the head of CCHR Texas, which has the strongest law to date providing protections against ECT, including a report system that records deaths during and up to 14 days of receiving electroshock.

CCHR draws attention to little known facts about ECT:

- Pregnant women, even in their third trimester, are electroshocked despite adverse events that include miscarriage, premature labor, stillbirth, fetal heart problems and malformations. [3]

- Women are 2-3 times more likely than men to receive ECT. Approximately 70% of shock survivors are women and 45-50% are over 60 years old, with 10-15% being 80 years and older. [4]

- Hundreds of U.S. veterans are given electroshock treatment every year, according to Veteran Administration statistics. [5]

- ECT adverse effects include cardiovascular complications, stroke, cognitive and memory impairment, prolonged seizures; worsening of psychiatric symptoms and death. [6]

- A July 2018 United Nations Human Rights Council report on "Mental health and human rights,"



CCHR's mission is to eradicate abuses committed under the guise of mental health and enact patient and consumer protections.



called on governments to recognize that forced psychiatric treatment, including ECT, are “practices constituting torture or other cruel, inhuman or degrading treatment or punishment....” [7] A February 16, 2013, UN Special Rapporteur on Torture and Other Cruel Inhuman or Degrading Treatment or Punishment report defined procedures such as electroshock without the consent of the patient as a form of torture. [8]

• Australian psychiatrist, Niall McLaren wrote that any psychiatrist who says, ‘You need ECT’ is really only saying, ‘I don’t know what else to do.’ I will repeat: No psychiatrist needs to use ECT.” [9]

CCHR is a mental health watchdog group established in 1969 by the Church of Scientology and the late professor of psychiatry, Dr. Thomas Szasz from the State University of New York Upstate Medical University in Syracuse. CCHR has been instrumental in obtaining informed consent rights for patients and a prohibition of ECT on children and adolescents in California, Colorado, Tennessee, Texas and in Western Australia—the latter enforcing criminal penalties, including jail, if electroshock is administered to anyone younger than 14. [10]

About CCHR: Initially established by the Church of Scientology and renowned psychiatrist Dr. Thomas Szasz in 1969, CCHR’s mission is to eradicate abuses committed under the guise of mental health and enact patient and consumer protections. L. Ron Hubbard, founder of Scientology, first brought psychiatric imprisonment to wide public notice: “Thousands and thousands are seized without process of law, every week, over the ‘free world’ tortured, castrated, killed. All in the name of ‘mental health,’” he wrote in March 1969. For more information visit, [www.cchrflorida.org](http://www.cchrflorida.org)

Sources:

<https://www.cchrflorida.org/cchr-led-hundreds-of-protestors-outside-psychiatric-convention-demanding-a-ban-on-electroshock-treatment/>

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