

**Christian Science Committee on Publication
for Western Australia**

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Dr David Worth

Principal Research Officer - Education and Health Standing Committee

Legislative Assembly

Parliament House

Perth 6000

9 May, 2008

Dear Sir

Re: Inquiry into General Health Screening of Children at Pre-Primary and Primary School Level

Thank you for the opportunity to comment regarding the above inquiry. This letter identifies the need to ensure parental consent is obtained prior to all general health screening of children at pre-primary and primary school level in any new proposal in this regard under consideration by the WA government.

About the submitter

The Christian Science Committee on Publication for Western Australia is part of a worldwide group of representatives who are appointed by local Christian Science branch churches in those countries to provide accurate information to the government and media relating to Christian Science and its founder, Mary Baker Eddy.

Note: Christian Science is not related in any way to Scientology.

Reason for submitting

It is important that a requirement for parental consent to health screening of school children be preserved in any guidelines or amendments to the Act under consideration, so that parents who prefer other forms of healthcare may reasonably exercise choice in selecting the method of care that they determine most effective for their children.

Background

Amongst non-medical forms of spiritual healthcare, Christian Science is a method of healing founded by Mary Baker Eddy which is based on the Bible. Its method is described in Eddy's primary text *Science and Health with Key to the Scriptures*. It is practiced by people around the world.¹ It is based on a set of spiritual principles relating to the nature of God and His creation. These principles have been found to be effective by many in their own lives and the lives of their family.

For most parents, an ability to responsibly exercise choice in selecting the method of care that is most effective is important in raising children. Health screening may be incompatible with a parent's preferred method of healthcare and parents generally should be afforded the option to give or refuse consent to such health screening.

Generally, a Christian Scientist's first choice is to rely on prayer for healing. And in most cases that means a medical remedy is unnecessary. There is no biblical or church mandate to forgo medical intervention, nor do Christian Scientists believe that it's God's will that anyone suffer or die. A Christian Scientist's decision to rely on prayer comes not from blind faith, but a deepening understanding of his or her relationship to God, and from a conviction that God's care continues under every circumstance.

Conclusion

For the reasons discussed above, guidelines that ensure parental consent is obtained prior to all general health screening of children at pre-primary and primary school level would be welcomed in any proposal under consideration by the WA government.

Should you have any queries in regard to this submission, please do not hesitate to contact the writer.

Sincerely

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¹ For further information on Christian Science and its Founder Mary Baker Eddy see www.christianscience.com