

# NEWS RELEASE: Texas CAM Bill Update

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Unfortunately, the Texas Complementary and [Alternative Health Care Services bill](#) that we have fought for so vigorously for the last several months to ensure passage became officially “dead” on May 27<sup>th</sup>, 2011. The sincere efforts of the health-freedom groups (NHF, Texas Health Freedom Coalition, Sunshine Health Freedom, and Diane Miller), the individual health-freedom activists from Texas, and even the non-Texans who helped us are to be commended. The individuals who came to the Capitol to testify and those who submitted their witness cards to the committees showing their support of this legislation was overwhelming. The personal testimonies given stating how alternative health practitioners had saved their lives was crucial to get our message across at the hearings.

The passage of this legislation had been tried twice before by the Texas Health Freedom Coalition; and Peter McCarthy, the Coalition Chairman, stated “Of the three sessions, the most progress and best inroads have been made during this session.” So, we felt optimistic about our chances for passage. After three years, the bill had now gotten out of the House and for the first time into the Senate. We also knew that Governor Rick Perry had introduced a bill that would dissolve the Texas Medical Board; and in its place, he asked for a more loosely run governing body over health affairs in Texas.

Unfortunately, the CAM bill never made it out of the Senate and to the floor. There are several contributing factors that should be known about the demise of this legislation. Last Fall, the AMA (American Medical Association) had hired two dozen lobbyists whose sole goal was to get these types of bills killed. Sadly, their mission was accomplished. The Texas Medical Board was, of course, one of the biggest foes but beside them fighting against us were the Dieticians Association, the Acupuncturists, the Massage therapists, and the Asian body-work people, all who came to the Capitol and hearings actively lobbying against the bill. To the surprise of all of us, Governor Rick Perry’s bill never even made it to a hearing.

Another bill that was part of our push for passage was SB1424, introduced by Lara Silva, an attorney for and the daughter of Michelle O’Donnell, the natural health practitioner who initially received a “cease and desist” order from the Texas Medical Board this Spring and who had spearheaded the Texas CAM bill legislation. SB1424 relates to the issuance of “cease and desist” orders by the TMB regarding practicing medicine without a license. The bill quite reasonably required that the same formal hearing process provided to a licensed individual be equally afforded to an unlicensed person where there is an allegation of practicing medicine without a license. It would

have amended the current law on “cease and desist” orders. This bill went totally unopposed through the Texas House and the Senate and ended up on the “Local and Consent” calendar, the best to be on. But, this past Monday, when the calendar posting came out, the bill was not listed and our lobbyist discovered that the bill had been pulled. Was the culprit the AMA or TMB? We will never know. Representative John Garza, who authored and introduced the CAM bill in the House, has fought hard for the passage of both bills. Rep. Garza tried to get it attached to other Senate health bills but each time was refused and overruled by the committee Chair.

So ends our long health-freedom efforts in Texas for this legislative session, as all three bills are now officially “dead.” So many good groups and individuals fought this battle and we appreciate the hard work, long hours, and never-ending fortitude from everyone.

Our hopes for their successful passage and consequently more health-freedom choices for the people of Texas were dimmed by this outcome; but if you are familiar with the Federation, you will know that we always get back up to fight again as we have for the past 56 years.

Our sincere appreciation and thanks to everyone involved.