



## Up The Creek April 1, 2014

### *Drug Out?*

Thanks to periodically recurring investigative reports by the Associated Press and its ugly sisters that make up what's called "The Media," we have become informed of the possible presence of pharmaceutical substances in our tap water. The medical economics department at Up The Creek is pondering the ramifications of this. That is, we are studying how to ramify our customers.

The problem, according to the investigators who never tire of writing scare stories for fun and profit, is that sewage treatment plants, and the seemingly obligatory drinking water plants immediately downstream, can't/won't remove mood enhancers, pain killers, sex hormones, body part enlargers, body part shrinkers, etc. from the water. These items have been added to the water for years by ordinary citizens who duly followed instructions from the U.S. Food and Drug Administration, which instructions were duly repeated by "The Media," to flush your unused drugs down the drain. That's not quite the in thing to do any more, but it's hard to keep even "used" drugs out of the water. Some things that we ingest are not totally absorbed or metabolized.

The problem, according to water and wastewater experts, not including Up The Creek, is that the treatment technology for dealing with this floating pharmacopoeia is largely unknown, but will surely prove to be horribly expensive. And, they further observe, the concentrations being detected are infinitesimal. The technology for detecting them didn't even exist until recently. Besides, there is no medical evidence of any risk to human health whatsoever. Up The Creek prefers not to dwell on this last statement, as it doesn't help the case we are assembling. We prefer to believe that therapeutic quantities are present, and ought to be capitalized upon.

And that leads us to the problem according to USCDWUA: where's the money? Americans spend \$300 billion a year on legal prescriptions, not to mention other transactions conducted in dark places that very well could result in the purchase going down the toilet. At \$300 billion a year for 300 million American persons, it appears that each of us is worth at least a grand a year in pills, patches elixers and weed. All of that revenue is currently going to "Big Pharma" which we assume includes the makers, the shippers, the prescribers and the retailers.

Which brings us to what we think is the real problem: why are drinking water suppliers not recognized as part of "Big Pharma?" If our raw water sources, our treatment plants, our transmission lines, our distribution lines, and our meters are used to convey products worth one thousand dollars per year for each man, woman, and child, where is our share of the take? The Up The Creek medical math department has furnished us with the fact there are 2,700 persons drinking our water. Any hypothetical drugs therein have an annual market value of \$1,000 per capita. That's a revenue stream worth pursuing: \$2.7 million annually. Some may quibble that the hypothetical concentrations are so small as to have no effect on human health. We say phooey, that argument has never carried any weight with the EPA, which assigns very small limits to the ever-growing list of regulated water contaminants.

To be fair, we would only need a reasonable cut of the pie, say ten percent or \$270 thousand per year. We would collect this via a Medication Delivery Surcharge applied equally to all taps, at the rate of \$22 per month. The resulting revenue increase would buy the employees prescription coverage.

We don't understand why a clause like this wasn't included in the Affordable Care Act.

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p.s. The FDA still recommends flushing certain prescription meds down the tube, "to prevent abuse." Other kinds are to be mixed with used kitty litter and thrown in the trash, which sounds like abuse to us.

p.p.s. USCDWUA does not test for most pharmaceutical products. Such contamination of our water source is extremely unlikely.

p.p.p.s. Actually, mass medication by water is practiced; it's called fluoridation. USCDWUA does not do it.