

Physicians For Social Responsibility: Preventive Medicine For Nuclear War

Organization

Physicians for Social Responsibility (PSR) is a national, non-profit organization of physicians, dentists and medical students dedicated to professional and public education on the medical hazards of nuclear weapons and nuclear war.

PSR was formed in 1961 by a group of physicians who were troubled by the health implications of nuclear weapons testing in the atmosphere and the lack of data on the medical consequences of nuclear war. The organization played a major role in developing public understanding of the devastating capabilities of thermonuclear weapons, which contributed to the realization of the Limited Test Ban Treaty in 1963. In 1979, concerned about the hazards of nuclear weapons proliferation, physicians reactivated the dormant organization. Since that time, PSR's growth has been rapid and substantial.

Today, PSR has more than 30,000 members with an additional 20,000 contributors. Our 154 local chapters are spread across 48 states. As a grassroots organization of experts, many of whom are leaders in their local communities, PSR has become an influential force in opening up a national dialogue on arms control. Our network of local affiliates provided a base from which a national movement in support of a bilateral freeze developed. Our success has already stimulated the formation of a number of parallel organizations—educators, lawyers and business people—with similar objectives. PSR has affected the political climate surrounding nuclear issues as well. In our nation's capitol the PSR Washington office serves as liaison to Congress and to the Administration and alerts PSR's chapters and leadership to important national legislation. Additionally, as the United States affiliate of International Physicians for the Prevention of Nuclear War (IPPNW), we have joined Soviet and other physicians in a *worldwide* forum on nuclear war prevention.

Activities

In a series of symposia on "The Medical Consequences of Nuclear Weapons and Nuclear War," held in Boston, New York, San Francisco, Seattle, Chicago, Albuquerque, Los Angeles, Salt Lake City, Toronto, Philadelphia, and elsewhere, we have spurred thousands of citizens to action through our clinical presentation on the devastation of nuclear war. The participation in these forums of eminent physicians, scientists and statesman, such as former Secretary of State Cyrus Vance, Dr. Jonas Salk, and Dr. Carl Sagan, has given our work national attention. Major media outlets regularly carry the PSR message to the public.

Around the country PSR chapters serve as resource centers for their communities, training and scheduling speakers for a wide range of professional, civic and community groups. Currently there are 1,500 such speakers. Our educational grassroots projects, such as *Target Seattle* and *Countdown Connecticut*, have involved entire cities in week-long programs on how best to prevent nuclear war. PSR has testified before Congress on the medical consequences of nuclear war and before city

councils and other government bodies nationwide on the futility of civil defense, and other programs geared to nuclear confrontation. We are now conducting voter education programs, including candidate forums and debates, and joining local and national coalitions with other professional groups.

As a *national* resource center, PSR distributes its own books, publications and newsletter, as well as special pamphlets, reprints and selected audio-visual materials. PSR's compelling film, *The Last Epidemic*, has been shown on closed-circuit TV in Congress, and is regularly shown in forums and meetings nationwide. Our newest publication on civil defense planning, *The Counterfeit Ark*, is considered the definitive refutation of the government's illusion of nuclear survivability through civil defense.

PSR has played an important role in encouraging the medical community and other professions to work in concert toward the prevention of nuclear war. There are now courses in over 2/3 of American medical schools on the effects of nuclear war. Articles appear regularly in leading medical and scientific journals. State and national medical societies have passed resolutions condemning nuclear weapons and nuclear war. In addition, the American Medical Association, the American Public Health Association and the American Psychiatric Association have passed resolutions supporting participation of physicians in the campaign to prevent nuclear warfare. In just a few short years, Physicians for Social Responsibility has demonstrated the tremendous impact physicians can have when they address the health issues of nuclear technology.

Objectives

PSR hopes to create a citizenry so well informed on the medical dangers of nuclear weapons that in time the threat of nuclear war itself may be eradicated. Through our work and that of other anti-nuclear organizations, Americans have begun to question the sanity of the arms race. Their new awareness is leading them to *demand* arms control and disarmament. PSR supports:

- a bilateral, verifiable nuclear weapons freeze, and
 - a Comprehensive Test Ban Treaty;
- and opposes:
- the production and employment of "First Strike" weapons;
 - civil defense planning for nuclear war; and,
 - a "Star Wars" program of space-based weapons.

We see 1985 as a crucial year for translating widespread public concerns into concrete action.

But we need your help. Only through your financial support can we expand our educational efforts. Together, we *can* make a difference. Help us to prevent the *final epidemic*. Ending the nuclear arms race is our most urgent task.

PHYSICIANS FOR SOCIAL RESPONSIBILITY

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A copy of the last annual financial report filed with the New York State Department of State may be obtained upon request by writing to: State of New York, Department of State, 162 Washington Avenue, Albany, New York 12231 or Physicians for Social Responsibility at the above address.