



Paul Wilkins

August 26, 2013

Dear Mr. Wilkins,

Your letter addressed to the Secretary Sebelius was received by the Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration's (SAMHSA) Center for Mental Health Services for response. Thank you for sharing the article you wrote about using the title Doctor and the unintended distress possibly arising from the notion of being judged by someone of authority.

Further confusion does occur from time to time in terms of the field of learning. I think of my sister, Dr. Fry with a PhD in philosophy, who might by introduction at a dinner party be informed by her new acquaintance that, "oh, you're not a real doctor." My father always related a the humorous tale of being drafted into the army after finishing law school and being assigned to the Medical Service Corps because his degree described him as a "Doctor of Juris Prudence".

I appreciate your bringing this issue to our attention and reminding us that more natural, casual, and humanistic approaches offer much in the way of healing. That is one of the reasons SAMHSA supports peer services; wherein those with the lived experience of recovery from mental health problems provide support to others who are earlier along in the process. These more egalitarian relationships, I think, offer both hope and a level openness that can be quite encouraging to an individual. Thank you again, for sharing your views with us.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Steven Fry', written over a white background.

Steven Fry, M.S.

Associate Director for Consumer Affairs  
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