



*Bart Madden, Scott Riccio (Accelerated Progress), and Alphonse Crespo (Medicine & Liberty, Switzerland) at the 2009 Atlas Liberty Forum.*

# BRINGING PRESCRIPTION DRUGS TO MARKET

**W**hen 19-year-old Abigail Burroughs was diagnosed with head and neck cancer in 1999, the drug treatment Ertibux was not yet approved by the Food and Drug Administration. As Abigail's condition became dire, her family fought the FDA for access to the drug arguing that terminally ill patients with "desperate diagnoses" had the constitutional right to experiment with developmental drugs. The drug had responded well in early tests and Abigail's oncologist at Johns Hopkins believed Ertibux had a good chance of saving her life.

The FDA held their position and Abigail died in 2001.

Abigail's case is not uncommon, which is why her father Frank is working to give patients more access to experimental drugs through the Abigail Alliance. This story and hundreds of thousands like it inspired Atlas supporter, Bartley Madden, to take up the cause for freedom of choice and individual risk assessment of alternative drug options.

Madden has toured extensively introducing his proposal for "Dual

Tracking" within the FDA drug approval process. Dual tracking is a project to introduce an alternative track to the FDA's extensive, risk-averse approval process. According to Madden, "Today it takes an average of eight years and more than \$800 million for a drug company to complete FDA testing and gain approval to market a single drug." Madden's prescription calls on Congress to allow doctors and patients to choose between two tracks, one where they can minimize risk by using only approved drugs, and one where they can use experimental drugs, or ones that have yet to be

approved (by dealing directly with manufacturers). The benefits of the freedom to choose, Madden says, would be great and include rapid scientific discovery and economic rewards (higher stock prices) for firms that demonstrate proven track records for their drugs. Oh, and families might be able to spend a little more time together. Perhaps Abigail Burroughs could have had a chance of surviving.

Madden is not alone in this struggle. His intellectual comrade-in-arms, physician and Atlas friend Alphonse Crespo is based in Switzerland and is the founder of Medicine & Liberty. MedLib is an independent network of doctors dedicated to the study and advocacy of liberty, ethics, and markets in medical services. Through the MedECON project, they have tasked themselves with educating healthcare professionals about the role and importance of free markets in medicine. MedLib promotes professional autonomy for doctors, freedom of choice for patients, and therapeutic innovation free from bureaucratic obstruction.

Working in Atlas's "catalyst and connector" role, Jo Kwong introduced Madden and Crespo, believing they would be natural allies in the quest to bring greater freedom of choice to consumers. Madden and Crespo are now working to establish a center in Europe that will promote choice in medicine and create an environment where dual tracking can be adopted and serve as a model for other nations.

Similar Atlas introductions have led to exciting possibilities elsewhere. The organization Japanese for Tax Reform recently published a Japanese translation of Madden's booklet on Dual Tracking. Waldemar Ingdahl of the Swedish think tank, Eudoxa, hosted a

seminar on dual tracking and access to unapproved drugs in Stockholm that attracted over one hundred leading European health officials. The Lithuanian Free Market Institute is also involved in discussions to produce projects and events to highlight this simple, yet potentially pivotal, idea.

At the 2009 Atlas Liberty Forum, Madden, Crespo, and Ingdahl presented their work as participants in a panel discussion entitled "Bringing Prescription Drugs to Market."

To watch this panel go to: <http://www.ustream.tv/recorded/1431891>



At the 2009 Liberty Forum Bart Madden outlined his "Dual Tracking" plan for bringing more consumer choice in medicine.

The Japanese translation of Dual Tracking: More Choices, Better Health by Japanese for Tax Reform, originally published by The Heartland Institute in Chicago, Illinois.

