

F O R I M M E D I A T E R E L E A S E

## Victoria drug policy critic takes on health care crisis with a dose of unconventional medicine

VICTORIA –Canadian health care is in crisis, falling prey to a new and seemingly unstoppable ill: Disease Mongering. But University of Victoria drug policy researcher Alan Cassels is about to unleash a cure—the power of healthy skepticism, humour and poetry. And to launch this new miracle remedy, he’s bypassing the drug companies and going straight to the pharmacy.

In Cassels’ new book, *The ABCs of Disease Mongering: An epidemic in 26 letters* (Emdash Publishing, Victoria, 2008), the well-known commentator on drug policy tickles your funny bone with his new take on the very real and growing phenomenon of Disease Mongering—the practice of convincing more and more of us that we’re patients, in order to sell us health treatments of all sorts.

Cassels, co-author of the international bestseller *Selling Sickness: How the world’s biggest pharmaceutical companies are turning us all into patients* (GreyStone 2005), diagnoses this growing epidemic through the use of humour, silly rhymes, bizarre illustrations and more than the recommended daily allowance of scholarly research.

The result is a book that not only gives a fresh new perspective on a health care issue of concern to us all, but creates a new literary genre: Pharmaceutical Policy Poetry. His little pink book has been called “frighteningly funny” by the online Tyee news service.

“By sugar-coating the message with humorous rhymes, maybe we can painlessly spread the word about an epidemic that’s threatening our health and the sustainability of our health care systems,” says Cassels. “This epidemic is only going to get worse, so my prescription is to take a dose of healthy skepticism whenever you’re given a new diagnosis.”

To celebrate the publication of *The ABCs of Disease Mongering*, Cassels will read and sign books at a Victoria pharmacy that specializes in an integrated approach to health care. The event takes place at 7:30 p.m. on Friday, January 18, at the Lalli Care Clinic, 1139 Yates. All are welcome.

Cassels will also appear at the Lalli Clinic booth at the Victoria Health Show on Saturday, January 19, and Sunday, January 20, at the Victoria Conference Centre.

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FOR MORE INFORMATION:

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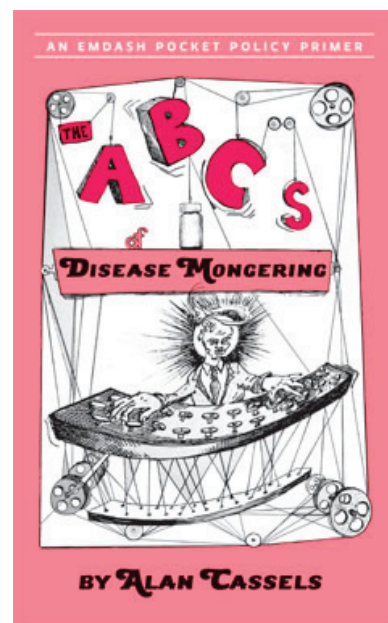
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EMDASH PUBLISHING is represented by the Literary Press Group of Canada. Distribution and fulfillment to the book trade provided by LitDistCo.

ISBN 978-0-9780182-3-8  
Health / Humour / Poetry  
Pocket paperback  
4 1/8" x 6 1/2"  
128 Pages • \$9.95



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