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IN CASE YOU MISSED IT

STAT: Many patient groups have deep ties to pharma but fail to disclose backing

January 24, 2020 – STAT [published an article yesterday](#) detailing a recent review of over two dozen studies that analyze the connection between pharmaceutical industry-funded patient organizations and the policies for which they advocate. Researchers found results to be “yet more evidence that conflicts of interest between patient groups and industry are extensive and run deep.” The analysis calls attention to “widespread commercial biases in the representation of patient interests, with misalignment between the public’s health priorities and advocacy driven health policy.”

The review comes as advocate groups have a considerable impact on policy conversations and while the pharmaceutical industry is under strict scrutiny for overpricing. The conflict of interest created by the pharmaceutical industry’s attempt to advocate under the guise of patient groups has led to concerns of misusing influence to contribute to increased drug costs.

Excerpts from the story are below. You can read the full piece [here](#).

STAT: [Many patient groups have deep ties to pharma but fail to disclose backing](#)
By Ed Silverman
January 23, 2020

“...a new analysis finds that patient groups funded by drug makers generally support corporate interests, few groups have policies governing industry backing, and transparency is often lacking.

A systematic review of 26 studies that examined patient advocacy groups found industry funding ranged from 20% to 83% of these organizations. Of those that received corporate backing, only 27% disclosed this information on their web sites.

Four of the studies analyzed the relationship between organizational positions and industry funding, and addressed such issues as over-diagnosis, pharmaceutical advertising, harm from opioid use, and high drug costs. The researchers noted that all four studies represented situations in which a conflict existed between the interests of the drug companies and the interests of patients or the public.

...Consequently, the relationship between drug companies and patient groups is of growing interest because advocates can have a substantial impact on policy debates.

Patient groups are powerful advocates with influence over health policy. If industry-funded patient groups are more likely to flourish and to have the most influence over the health sector, this could lead to widespread commercial biases in the representation of patient interests, with misalignment between the public's health priorities and advocacy driven health policy," the researchers wrote...

... a pair of academics wrote that the results "suggest that financial relationships pose real, not potential, conflicts of interest — with alignment between organizational positions and industry interests even when contrary to patient welfare. This is of particular concern given the power of patient groups internationally.

The findings "provide yet more evidence that conflicts of interest between patient groups and industry are extensive and run deep.

Read the entire STAT story [here](#).

Watch a [RunawayRx explanatory video](#) about the three ways patients are consumers are paying beyond their prescription costs, click [here](#).