



Summary - The Pharmaceutical Industry and Mandatory Vaccination of Healthcare Workers

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In recent years the pharmaceutical industry has aggressively promoted vaccines, as they have become a new profit center.¹ While direct support by pharmaceutical companies of legislation mandating influenza vaccinations for healthcare workers was not found, Pfizer, Gilead, Merck and other major pharmaceutical companies have bankrolled prominent advocates of vaccination mandates for healthcare workers, such as the Infectious Diseases Society of America (IDSA).² (See Table 1). It may be that pharmaceutical companies prefer to work behind the scenes through these and other proxies, such as academics (see example below). Healthcare workers may offer a convenient target of opportunity in a broader campaign of vaccine promotion that results in greater profits for Pharma. In this broader campaign hospital associations and hospital systems, who see an opportunity to scapegoat their workforces, appear only too eager to participate.

A 2011 paper "New Approaches for Influenza Vaccination of Healthcare Workers" lists seven organizations and the US Department of Defense recommending mandatory vaccinations of healthcare workers.³ Among the groups listed as supporting mandatory vaccinations of healthcare workers are several that have been found to take large sums from the pharmaceutical industry. These include the American Academy of Pediatrics (AAP), which according to 2008 CBS report received \$433,000 from Merck and \$342,000 from Wyeth (now owned by Pfizer)⁴ and the Infectious Diseases Society of America (IDSA) which has received over \$6 million in donations, primarily from the pharmaceutical industry between 2010 and 2015,

¹ How Big Pharma Profits from Swine Flu, [Bloomberg](https://www.bloomberg.com/news/articles/2009-11-24/how-big-pharma-profits-from-swine-flu), November 24, 2009,

<https://www.bloomberg.com/news/articles/2009-11-24/how-big-pharma-profits-from-swine-flu>

² Infectious Disease Society of America (IDSA), Grants and contributions received by IDSA 2010-2015,

http://www.idsociety.org/IDSA_Industry_Relations/, accessed 1/3/18

³ Johnson, James G. and Thomas R. Talbot, "New approaches for influenza vaccination of healthcare workers" *Current Opinion in Infectious Diseases* 2011, 24:363–369 <https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pubmed/21587072>, accessed 1/3/18

⁴ CBS News, How Independent are Vaccine Defenders, July 25, 2008 <https://www.cbsnews.com/news/how-independent-are-vaccine-defenders/>

including \$1.3 million each from Gilead Sciences (makers of the Hepatitis C vaccine Sovaldi) and Pfizer.⁵ (See Table 1) Another group listed as supporting mandatory vaccinations of healthcare workers, the Society for Healthcare Epidemiology (SHEA) may not be different in any meaningful way from the Infectious Diseases Society of America (IDSA) since it shares the same Arlington, VA address as the IDSA, and its employees are stated on its IRS Form 990 to be IDSA employees.⁶ SHEA admits to taking corporate money, but unlike IDSA does not disclose sources or amounts.⁷ Other groups listed as advocating for mandatory vaccinations such as the National Patient Safety Foundation appear to have relationships with companies such as Pfizer, but do not disclose those relationships.⁸

The 2011 paper "New Approaches for Influenza Vaccination of Healthcare Workers" which lists these groups, itself recommends mandatory vaccinations for healthcare workers.⁹ Buried under the acknowledgements at the end of the paper, the authors note that one author Thomas R. Talbot received research support from pharmaceutical company and vaccine maker Sanofi-Pasteur, while his co-author James G. Johnson receives a salary from the Sanofi-Pasteur fellowship in Vaccinology and Healthcare Epidemiology.¹⁰ Thomas Talbot's wife Dr. Helen Keipp Talbot is acknowledged to receive research support from Wyeth Pharmaceuticals (owned by Pfizer), Sanofi-Pasteur, and Vaxxinate.¹¹

For other diseases, comprehensive and aggressive multi-million dollar campaigns to drive up profits by mandating the use of vaccines have been used by companies such as Merck in its promotion of the HPV vaccine Gardasil, which Merck made into a household name in 2006 and 2007.¹² A study of Merck's campaign found that Merck: "...promoted school-entry mandate

⁵ Infectious Disease Society of America (IDSA), Grants and contributions received by IDSA 2010-2015, http://www.idsociety.org/IDSA_Industry_Relations/, accessed 1/3/18

⁶ Infections Diseases Society of America (IDSA), 2015 IRS Form 990, http://990s.foundationcenter.org/990_pdf_archive/237/237045686/237045686_201512_9900.pdf, accessed 1/3/18, Society of Healthcare Epidemiology, 2015, IRS Form 990, see Schedule J Part 3 http://990s.foundationcenter.org/990_pdf_archive/581/581410314/581410314_201512_9900.pdf

⁷ Society for Healthcare Epidemiology, <http://www.shea-online.org/index.php/about/financial-disclosure-policy>

⁸ See for example: <http://www.npsf.org/news/233468/The-Pfizer-Health-Literacy-Award-in-Advancing-Patient-Safety.htm>

⁹ Johnson, James G. and Thomas R. Talbot, "New approaches for influenza vaccination of healthcare workers" Current Opinion in Infectious Diseases 2011, 24:363–369 <https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pubmed/21587072>, accessed 1/3/18

¹⁰ Ibid

¹¹ Ibid

¹² Pharmaceutical Companies' Role in State Vaccination Policymaking: The Case of Human Papillomavirus Vaccination, [Am J Public Health](#). 2012 May; 102(5): 893–898. Published online 2012

May. doi: [10.2105/AJPH.2011.300576](https://doi.org/10.2105/AJPH.2011.300576), accessed 1/3/18 see also Rosenthal, Elizabeth " Drug Makers' Push Leads to

legislation by serving as an information resource, lobbying legislators, drafting legislation, mobilizing female legislators and physician organizations, conducting consumer marketing campaigns, and filling gaps in access to the vaccine."¹³

While direct involvement of the pharmaceutical industry is difficult to demonstrate in this case, they can be seen to be waging this fight through proxies such as independent seeming organizations and academics. Merck's recent history with Gardasil also shows that when the incentives are right the industry will wage wide and aggressive campaigns to benefit itself.

Table 1. Financial Contributions to the Infectious Disease Society of America 2010 through 2015 Disclosed by IDSA

Total	\$6,021,324
Gilead Sciences	\$1,343,524
Pfizer Inc	\$1,298,000
Astellas Pharma U.S., Inc.	\$430,000
Merck	\$378,000
Ortho-McNeil Pharmaceutical	\$375,000
Genentech USA, Inc.	\$275,000
Cubist Pharmaceuticals, Inc.	\$265,000
ViiV Healthcare	\$210,000
The Medicines Company	\$200,000
Forest Laboratories, Inc.	\$180,000
Optimer Pharmaceuticals, Inc.	\$138,000
Janssen Therapeutics	\$114,250
Clorox Professional Products Company	\$100,000
Tibotec Therapeutics	\$100,000
AbbVie Inc.	\$95,000
Bristol-Myers Squibb	\$57,500
HEALIX	\$51,000
Activas	\$50,000
AstraZeneca	\$40,000
Sigma-Tau Pharmaceuticals, Inc.	\$35,000
Vertex Pharmaceuticals	\$35,000

Cancer Vaccines' Rise", New York Times, August 19, 2008, <http://www.nytimes.com/2008/08/20/health/policy/20vaccine.html>, accessed 1/3/18

¹³ Ibid

Eisai, Inc.	\$30,000
Advanced Sterilization Products	\$25,000
BioFire Diagnostics, Inc.	\$20,000
PhRMA	\$20,000
Takeda Pharmaceuticals International GmbH	\$20,000
Walgreens Infusion Services	\$20,000
3M Health Care	\$16,000
Durata Therapeutics, Inc.	\$15,000
Salix Pharmaceuticals, Inc.	\$15,000
Sanofi Pasteur	\$15,000
Vidara Therapeutics	\$15,000
Cellectis, a QIAGEN Company	\$10,000
EMD Serano, Inc.	\$10,000
HHI Infusion Services	\$10,000
MedImmune	\$10,000
Qiagen	\$10,000
Trius Therapeutics	\$10,000
Bio Merieux, Inc.	\$5,000
DIATHERIX Laboratories	\$5,000
Intelligent MDX, Inc	\$5,000
Inverness Medical Innovations	\$5,000
Roche Diagnostics Corporation	\$5,000
Roche Molecular Systems	\$5,000