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ProPublica Communications

Greetings,

Dear Reporter/Editor:

ProPublica is preparing a major update to [our Dollars for Docs database](#), and we want to invite your news organization to participate in a roll-out of stories based on the new data.

As you may know, some pharmaceutical companies have begun publishing information on their websites about payments they've made to doctors and other health professionals for promotional speaking and consulting. On September 8, 2011, we will publish an updated version of our searchable database of payments that will now include data from 12 drug companies (about 40 percent of the U.S. market). The new information includes a full year of data from eight of those companies, allowing the first head-to-head comparisons of the fees paid by those companies. It is guaranteed to have a local angle of interest to your audience.

[Conflicts of interest in medicine](#) have been a major issue for the past several years. As part of last year's health reform bill, all drug and medical device companies will be required to publicly report their payments to physicians beginning in 2013. Some companies have started doing so before then, either voluntarily or as the result of legal settlements. But the payments listed on the companies' individual sites are not easy to search and analyze—our site is.

We first published our database and [initial report](#) last October with information from seven companies. But as additional companies have reported payments—and others have updated their figures—it has become even more useful for consumers. You can begin to see which doctors in your communities have stopped speaking on behalf of drug companies and which have recently joined up.

Unlike our initial rollout, in which we had a limited number of media partners, **we are offering the data in advance to all interested**



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news organizations that agree to withhold publication of their stories prior to the launch of our update. We will make the data available on Aug. 22, under an embargo that lifts at 9 p.m. on Sept. 7. If you are interested, we can provide you with payment data for the state or states you cover, as well as a guide to using the data. Pulitzer Prize-winning reporters Charles Ornstein and Tracy Weber will also be available to offer advice and tips via e-mail (and [this podcast and transcript](#) offers more information as well).

You are also welcome to republish our overview story, which will run on Sept. 8.

If you are interested in being part of the Dollars for Docs update, or have other questions, please reply back to me no later than Friday, Aug. 26. Let us know if you have questions. Thanks a lot and we look forward to partnering with you on this story.

Best regards,

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