

PRESS RELEASE

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JAMA EDITORIAL SUPPORTS DISCLOSURE OF PAYMENTS TO PHYSICIANS

Physician Payments Sunshine Act Would Require Financial Ties Be Made Public

WASHINGTON – U.S. Senators Chuck Grassley (R-IA), Ranking Member of the Committee on Finance, and Herb Kohl (D-WI), Chairman of the Special Committee on Aging, reacted to an editorial in the latest issue of *JAMA*, made public today. In the article, the editors maintain that financial ties between physician and pharmaceutical companies should be disclosed both to the public and to professional colleagues. *JAMA* acknowledges that physicians have allowed the practice of accepting fees and gifts from drug companies to become commonplace, and that they have allowed the practice to influence them. The editors go so far as to call for physicians to reject payments and gifts in any form from the pharmaceutical and medical device industries.

“Transparency will help make the pharmaceutical and medical device industry more accountable to the public and that’s good for public safety and public confidence,” Grassley said. “Our bipartisan Physician Payments Sunshine Act is an important reform that Congress needs to consider sooner rather than later.”

“It appears that the editors at *JAMA* share our fear—that the lack of transparency is undermining the public’s confidence in the integrity of their physicians. I hope the article serves as a wake-up call to both the medical and drug industries,” said Kohl. “It’s time to seek meaningful change in the form of the Physician Payments Sunshine Act.”

Last June, the Senate Special Committee on Aging [held a hearing examining the relationships](#) between physicians and the pharmaceutical industry. Following the hearing, Senators Grassley and Kohl introduced the [Physician Payment Sunshine Act \(S.2029\)](#) to require manufacturers of pharmaceutical drugs, medical devices, and biologics to disclose the amount of money they give to doctors through payments, gifts, honoraria, travel and other means. In February of this year, the Aging Committee held a [second hearing to specifically examine](#) the financial interactions between medical device companies and surgeons.

The *JAMA* article also underscores the need for physician access to unbiased research about the drugs available on the market. In March, Chairman Kohl held a third hearing on a [practice known as academic detailing](#), an alternative to the prevailing practice of doctors receiving the latest information on new drugs from the drug manufacturers themselves. At the hearing, Kohl announced his plan to introduce a bill with Senator Dick Durbin (D-IL) to create a federal

academic detailing program. The bill would address the claim made by the drug industry that the Physician Payment Sunshine Act that it would potentially restrict their ability to inform doctors about new drugs.

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