

**Here are this week's health care news highlights from AskaPatient:**

- Triclosan, which can cause antibiotic resistance, was banned by the FDA in 2016, but is still found in many consumer products. <http://ow.ly/27WY30ncX0l> (01-07-19)
- Ruling from federal judge could severely restrict evidence used in Roundup cancer claim trial. <http://ow.ly/bXV430ncX3a> (01-07-19)
- Preclinical model suggests that increasing certain intestinal immune cells completely blocks inflammation in MS patients. <http://ow.ly/cvLO30ncX5f> (01-07-19)
- Auditory testing at birth can help diagnose autism spectrum disorders early and trigger early interventions. <http://ow.ly/TDil30ne5j4> (01-08-19)
- Anxiety-depressive disorder changes gene expression and causes dysfunctional metabolism in the brain. <http://ow.ly/1Alv30ne5jg> (01-08-19)
- Children born to moms who smoke marijuana during pregnancy see a greater risk of ADHD and memory dysfunction. <http://ow.ly/dCW430ne5Cn> (01-08-19)
- Overall cancer deaths have dropped significantly over the past 25 years, but not all groups share the same good news. <http://ow.ly/bfy530neWiE> (01-09-19)
- Common painkillers may make C. diff infections more severe by altering the balance of gut bacteria. <http://ow.ly/81f030neWnA> (01-09-19)
- New York mayor launches \$100 million universal health care plan to cover 600,000 uninsured residents. <http://ow.ly/cNGI30neWrq> (01-09-19)
- Georgia Tech researchers offer suggestion to tweak flu vaccine supply chain that could save thousands of lives annually. <http://ow.ly/PI6230nfM1l> (01-10-19)
- Cancer study results challenge long-held belief that cancer cells need glucose to grow. <http://ow.ly/EkaD30nfMbP> (01-10-19)
- Mosquito birth control shows promise as an option to control mosquito populations without affecting other organisms. <http://ow.ly/WK2130nfMkT> (01-10-19)
- Healthcare companies spent \$30 billion in one year on marketing, mostly to steer providers towards newer treatments. <http://ow.ly/rxbK30ngl9R> (01-11-19)
- In addition to developing new antibiotics, researchers point to a new strategy to stop resistance from spreading between bacteria. <http://ow.ly/MHyP30ngljt> (01-11-19)
- Experimental malaria vaccine proves to be safe for humans, next step to determine whether it prevents the disease. <http://ow.ly/vfal30nglya> (01-11-19)
- Childhood body composition predicts lung health later in life, with more muscle mass leading to greater lung growth rates. <http://ow.ly/3H0h30nhG0S> (01-12-19)
- As many as 84,000 Americans have been hospitalized for the flu so far this season. <http://ow.ly/iDtH30nhG11> (01-12-19) (see related article on our web site: <https://www.askapatient.com/news/influenza-vaccines-for-2018-2019.asp>)

**A look at physician payments for 2017 as reported by pharmaceutical companies to the Centers for Medicare & Medicaid Services (CMS) Open Payments Database**

The "Open Payments Database" (OPD) is a disclosure program created in 2013 as part of the Affordable Care Act. The program promotes transparency and accountability by helping consumers understand the financial relationships between pharmaceutical/medical device industries and physicians/teaching hospitals. CMS notes that "financial ties between the health care industry and health care providers do not necessarily indicate an improper relationship."

Here's why OPD might be useful to you:

- search the database by **physician name** to find out if your doctor or surgeon received payments from a pharmaceutical or medical device company, and learn detail about the payment (e.g. if it was for meals, travel, speaking fee, gift, etc.).
- If you are a patient at a teaching hospital, search by your **hospital name** to find out which pharmaceutical or medical device companies made payments to the hospital.

A notable industry trend is increased spending on physicians by biotech companies like Genentech, Biogene, and Celgene. Some traditional pharmaceutical companies, meanwhile, are upping their donations to patient advocacy groups. Critics say this is an alarming trend since large corporate donations to the charities might create conflicts of interest. Next week we'll feature a list of top donors and charitable recipients from the Kaiser Health News "Prescription for Power" database.

The table below lists examples of companies that spent tens of millions of dollars in 2017 on physicians as reported in the Open Payments Database. Research payments to physicians at teaching hospitals are not included in the totals. Note that California-based cancer drug maker Genentech (including both Genentech Inc. and Genentech USA) spent almost **half a billion dollars** on general physician payments in 2017. The amounts presented are for U.S. companies only. Links go to patient reviews or ratings forms for drugs.

#### PHARMACEUTICAL COMPANIES' PAYMENTS TO PHYSICIANS IN UNITED STATES, 2017

Company	Payments	Example Drugs
GENENTECH INC./USA	\$438,614,265	<a href="#">Rituxan</a>
ALLERGAN INC.	\$67,459,728	<a href="#">Botox</a> , <a href="#">Restasis</a> , <a href="#">Viberzi</a>
ASTRAZENECA	\$49,145,363	<a href="#">Bydureon</a> , <a href="#">Brilinta</a> , <a href="#">Symbicort</a>
PFIZER INC.	\$47,499,156	<a href="#">Eliquis</a> , <a href="#">Xeljanz</a> , <a href="#">Lyrca</a>
BIOGEN	\$47,378,225	<a href="#">Avonex</a>
VALEANT	\$43,597,728	<a href="#">Dermatop</a>
JANSSEN	\$42,164,378	<a href="#">Xarelto</a> , <a href="#">Invokana</a> , <a href="#">Invega</a>
MERCK	\$41,505,995	<a href="#">Keytruda</a> , <a href="#">Belsomra</a> , <a href="#">Januvia</a>
ABBVIE	\$40,806,099	<a href="#">Humira</a> , <a href="#">Viekira</a> , <a href="#">Androgel</a>
GENZYME	\$39,450,841	<a href="#">Taxotere</a>
CELGENE	\$38,882,221	<a href="#">Otezla</a>
GILEAD SCIENCES	\$37,524,087	<a href="#">Harvoni</a> , <a href="#">Ranexa</a> , <a href="#">Sovaldi</a>
AMGEN	\$33,567,971	<a href="#">Neulasta</a> , <a href="#">Prolia</a> , <a href="#">Repatha</a>

#### Sources and More Reading:

- **Center for Medicare Services (CMS)** [Open Payments Database \(OPD\)](#). Includes data since August 2013. Search by physician name, company name (including pharmaceutical and medical device companies), country of company, and teaching hospital. Results include number of payments, dollar amounts, drug or product associated with a payment, and nature of the payment. Data from 2017 was released in summer of 2018.

- "**CMS Open Payments Data 2017: Where Are All These Spend Disputes Coming From? Part I**" [Qordata.com article](#) Payment recipients are allowed to dispute the numbers reported to OPD. This article looks at the disputed numbers.

- **Facts about the Open Payments Data for 2017:** <https://openpaymentsdata.cms.gov/summary> Includes summary information such as:

10.9 million general payments were made to physicians totaling **\$2.82 billion** in 2017.

- **Additional data analysis** is available from Propublica's [Dollars for Docs Database](#) (covers through December 2016).

- **OPD in the news:** "A potent and controversial new opioid painkiller won federal approval this month based heavily on the work of a University of Minnesota doctor with a history of paid advocacy for the pharmaceutical industry." November 19, 2018. *Star Tribune*: <http://www.startribune.com/u-doctor-in-middle-of-opioid-conflict/500756911/>

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