

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

- Findings from a pain study surprise researchers with evidence that men are more sensitive to memories of pain than women. <http://ow.ly/y00i30nimDu> (01-14-19)
- Experimental pain meter seeks to identify not just pain level but an appropriate treatment as well based on pupil reaction. <http://ow.ly/PmzR30nimPa> (01-14-19)
- Fish protein wafers could help treat millions of children who experience severe acute malnutrition annually in Asia. <http://ow.ly/SV6J30nimVf> (01-14-19)
- Addiction and mental health helpline remain relatively unknown compared to the suicide helpline despite recent media coverage. <http://ow.ly/WuNs30njvsh> (01-15-19)
- Virtual doctor visits can safely replace office visits for more convenience and similar care for most patients, experts say. <http://ow.ly/rgv730njvtP> (01-15-19)
- For the first time in US history, opioids are deadlier than car accidents. <http://ow.ly/aJIS30njys0> (01-15-19)
- Hundreds more hospitals join nonprofit to create their own generic drugs to combat price hikes and shortages. <http://ow.ly/2xeL30njvzP> (01-16-19)
- Replacing half an hour of sitting with any type of physical activity cuts risk of early death by a third. <http://ow.ly/OHSI30nkoBs> (01-16-19)
- Lack of exposure to adversity puts Generation Z at greatest risk of poor mental health. <http://ow.ly/fQLD30nkoGa> (01-16-19)
- Experts stress the importance of getting the flu vaccine early into a pregnancy to protect the baby. <http://ow.ly/FYiN30nkoPQ> (01-17-19)
- In addition to lower energy usage, scientists say they can engineer LEDs to improve plant growth and nutritional value. <http://ow.ly/mAug30nlev1> (01-17-19)
- Self-administered acupressure improves pain, sleep, and depression after breast cancer treatment. <http://ow.ly/Bdpe30nleBr> (01-17-19)
- Study identifies a broad-spectrum antiviral that could treat the flu and MERS, among other viruses with a 3-day treatment. <http://ow.ly/5API30nleLQ> (01-18-19)
- Food recalls are becoming more and more common, but is more food actually getting contaminated? <http://ow.ly/kujk30nm7MJ> (01-18-19)
- Psychological distress identified as an important risk factor for dementia later in life. <http://ow.ly/75zY30nm7V1> (01-18-19)
- Rutgers scientists discover a gene that causes prostate cancer to spread and are able to turn it off in mice. <http://ow.ly/5y3430nm81E> (01-19-19)
- Lilly cancer drug, which received accelerated approval in 2016, fails clinical trial and will no longer be prescribed. <http://ow.ly/vNAN30nn5ve> (01-19-19)
- Home-based hypertension program gets most patients' blood pressure under control in a matter of weeks. <http://ow.ly/Jq7o30nn5vz> (01-19-19)
- Solco Health issued a new recall for irbesartan on Friday, January 18; details on FDA web site: <https://www.fda.gov/Safety/Recalls/ucm629627.htm> (see related article on our web site on valsartan, irbesartan, and losartan recalls <https://www.askapatient.com/news/generic-api-valsartan-worldwide-recall.asp>)

Patient non-profit advocacy groups and industry influence: KHN's Pre\$cription for Power Database

Last week, we presented an overview of the CMS (Center for Medicare and Medicaid Services) Open Payments Database.* The database allows users to search for drug company payments to or on behalf of physicians and teaching hospitals. There are at least three other "non-commercial" ways that pharmaceutical companies can make payments that have influence:

- Donations to non-profit patient advocacy groups
- Donations to political candidates
- Traditional lobbying

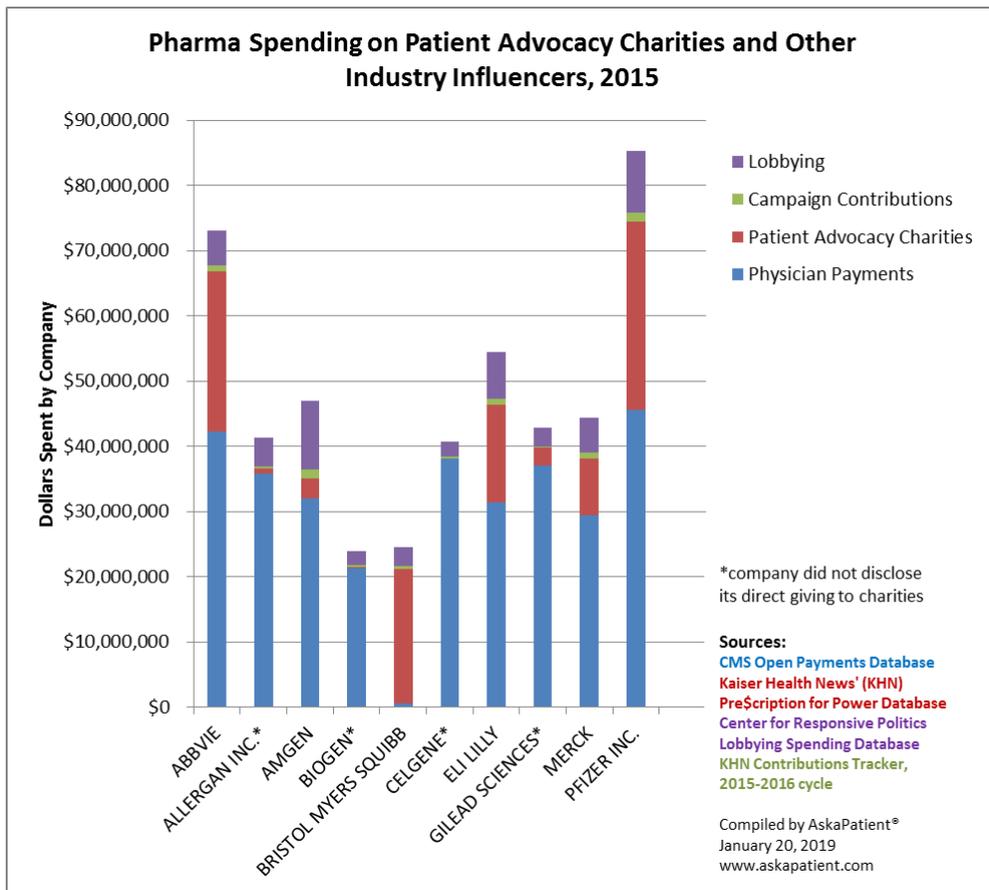
In 2018, Kaiser Health News (KHN) released its "**Pre\$cription for Power**" database, which gives detail on pharma industry donations to nonprofit **patient advocacy groups**.

KHN looked at twenty large pharma company's corporate and nonprofit foundation IRS filing statements for the year 2015, along with more than 1,200 non-profit organization profiles that matched the "patient advocacy" criteria that they set up. For example, the non-profit charities had to be 501(c)(3) designated, have revenue of at least \$500,000 for 2015 fiscal year, and not be a provider of health care. Non-profit hospitals and health care centers were not included, but organizations like the American Diabetes Association and co-pay assistance groups were included.

KHN researchers matched up corporate disclosures of donations to information about the recipient advocacy groups themselves and made the data available on their searchable web platform. The task was not easy, as neither corporate donors nor non-profit recipients are required to publicly disclose the identity of recipients or donors. Non-profit foundations set up by the companies **do** have to publicly disclose donation recipients, but not all companies contribute all of their donations through a foundation.

Out of KHN's selected 20 large pharmaceutical companies, researchers were able to track some payments to patient charities for 14 of them. 594 patient advocacy groups received a total of more than \$116 million in donations from those 14 companies. Many of the patient charities, even those that don't have a match for corporate donations in the KHN database, identify corporate sponsors on their web sites. And for those that do have matches, often many additional corporate sponsors are listed as donors. KHN database numbers probably represent just the tip of the iceberg when it comes to corporate donations to patient charities.

Using KHN charity payments data, along with three other sources, we created this snapshot of spending in 2015 on the four types of influencers by the ten pharmaceutical companies with the largest combined spending in the four categories. .



Sources and More Reading

- **Search the Kaiser Health News PreScript for Power Database** by company name or non-profit organization name. Link goes to article, then scroll down and click to search the database. <https://khn.org/patient-advocacy/>. The database function may not work from a mobile device.

- How KHN Gathered Data: <https://khn.org/patient-advocacy/#methodology>

- Center for Responsive Politics Lobbying Spending Database, Pharmaceuticals/Health Products, 2015:

<https://www.opensecrets.org/lobby/indusdcient.php?id=H04&year=2015>

- KHN Contributions Tracker - Pharma Cash to Congress, 2015: <https://khn.org/news/campaign/>

- CMS Open Payments Database: <https://openpaymentsdata.cms.gov/>

- Georgetown University's "Pharmed Out" organization maintains a list of patient advocacy groups that accept no funding from pharmaceutical, medical device, or biotech companies: <http://pharmedout.org/pharma-free-groups.html>

* Note: During the week of January 14, a notice appeared on the CMS Open Payments web site that the 2017 data is being updated with information received since June 2018. Last week's chart of pharma payments to physicians will be updated in the coming weeks with changes to the 2017 payments data. We will post the corrections on our web site and in the newsletter.

Please Vote in our New Opinion Poll:

Which of the following actions to curb e-cigarette use by youths would you support the MOST?

1. **Require that e-cigarettes be FDA-regulated as a nicotine replacement therapy**
2. **Eliminate easy access to flavored versions**
3. **Raise the minimum age from 18 to 21 for purchasing nicotine-containing products**

4. **More restrictions on advertising**

5. **Other**

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