

United States Senate

COMMITTEE ON FINANCE

WASHINGTON, DC 20510-6200

April 6, 2009

Via Electronic Transmission

Michael J. Fitzpatrick
Executive Director
National Alliance on Mental Illness
Colonial Place Three
2107 Wilson Blvd., Suite 300
Arlington, VA 22201

Anand Pandya, M.D.
President
Board of Directors
National Alliance on Mental Illness
Colonial Place Three
2107 Wilson Blvd., Suite 300
Arlington, VA 22201

Dear Mr. Fitzpatrick and Dr. Pandya:

The United States Senate Committee on Finance (Committee) has jurisdiction over the Medicare and Medicaid programs and, accordingly, a responsibility to the more than 80 million Americans who receive health care coverage under these programs. As Ranking Member of the Committee, I have a duty to protect the health of Medicare and Medicaid beneficiaries and safeguard taxpayer dollars authorized by Congress for these programs.

For the last three years, the Committee has been investigating various aspects of the pharmaceutical industry, including consulting arrangements and industry funding for Continuing Medical Education (CME). My staff has also examined several issues related to non-profit organizations, and I have read newspaper accounts documenting the strong ties between the pharmaceutical industry and non-profit charities. I am hoping that you can provide me with some additional insight into these relationships.

Based upon reporting in the *New York Times*, I have come to understand that money from the pharmaceutical industry shapes the practices of non-profit organizations which purport to be independent in their viewpoints and actions.^[1] Specifically, it is alleged that pharmaceutical companies give money to non-profits in an attempt to garner favor in ways that increase sales of their products. In a recent opinion piece in the *Journal of the American Medical Association*, several leading thinkers in medicine called on medical societies to better control these ties to pharmaceutical companies in order to guard against possible conflicts of interest.^[2]

Accordingly, I would appreciate an accounting of industry funding that pharmaceutical companies or foundations established by these companies have provided to the National Alliance on Mental Illness (NAMI). (The term "industry funding" means

^[1] *The New York Times* "Charities Tied to Doctors Get Drug Industry Gifts," June 28, 2006.

^[2] Rothman, David, "Professional Medical Associations and Their Relationships With Industry: A Proposal for Controlling Conflict of Interest," *JAMA*. 2009; 301(13):1367-1372 (doi:10.1001/jama.2009.407).

any transfer of value from a pharmaceutical company, including but not limited to grants, donations, and sponsorship for meetings or programs, etc.) This request covers the period of January 2005 to the present.

Because reporting practices vary widely from one charitable organization to another, I would appreciate you also placing this income into a chart, detailing annual amounts of industry funding from pharmaceutical companies. For each year, please provide the following information for NAMI:

1. Year;
2. Name of company;
3. Amount of funding; and
4. Reason(s) that the funding was provided.

In addition, please explain NAMI's policies for accepting industry funding by answering the following questions. For each question, please respond by first repeating the enumerated question followed by the appropriate answer.

- 1) Please describe the policies for accepting industry funding and whether or not NAMI allows companies to place restrictions or provide guidance on how funding will be spent.
- 2) If NAMI allows companies to place restrictions on industry funding, then please explain all restrictions and/or guidance for each transfer of value from a pharmaceutical company since January 2005. For every transfer of value with a restriction, please provide the following information: year of transfer, name of company, and restriction placed on funding.

In cooperating with the Committee's review, no documents, records, data or information related to these matters shall be destroyed, modified, removed or otherwise made inaccessible to the Committee.

I look forward to hearing from you by no later than April 27, 2009. All documents responsive to this request should be sent electronically in PDF format to Brian_Downey@finance-rep.senate.gov. If you have any questions, please do not hesitate to contact Brian Downey or Paul Thacker at (202) 224-4515.

Sincerely,



Charles E. Grassley
Ranking Member