

Auth: Jerry Moore
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Docket: NIH-2008-0002

Public Submission Title: Comment from Ned Feder, M.D.,
Staff Scientist, Project On Government Oversight

Date Submitted: July 9, 2009, by fax, to Jerry Moore, NIH
Regulations Officer

Those considering the amendment of regulations covered by NIH-2008-0002 should examine the passage below. It comes from a Letter to the Editor, "Public disclosure could deter conflicts of interest," published in *Nature* four years ago, before Senator Grassley discovered shocking financial conflicts of interest among NIH grantees.

The NIH should require grantees to make public disclosures of their paid arrangements with pharmaceutical, investment and other companies, as well as their ownership of stock and stock options, as a condition of having their medical research funded by the government. The private finances of any US senator or representative can be checked in an instant through links at www.opensecrets.org/pfds. Why not create, by law, a similar system for medical researchers who receive government funding? [Nature, vol. 437, page 620, Sept. 29, 2005]

The NIH has not supported this kind of full public disclosure in the past, but it should do so now.

Sincerely,



Ned Feder, M.D.
Staff Scientist
Project On Government Oversight
1100 G Street, NW
Washington, DC 20005
202-347-1122
nfeder@pogo.org

nature

29 Sept 2005; 437: 620
Correspondence

Public disclosure could deter conflicts of interest

SIR — Your Business story "Fears rise over leaks of clinical trial results" (*Nature* 437, 191; 2005) describes a conflict-of-interest scandal in which US medical researchers with inside knowledge of ongoing clinical trials are being paid for information they provide as consultants to Wall Street analysts and investors.

The National Institutes of Health (NIH) could start fixing this problem, at least for its own grantees. NIH-funded researchers are required to provide details of any consulting arrangements to their universities, which in turn approve or veto the plans. This information is confidential and usually cannot be seen by the public.

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A proposal to require readily accessible financial disclosure will probably be fought tooth and nail by those who benefit from leaving things as they are: some university researchers and administrators, officials at the NIH and scientists in industry.

It is an inescapable fact, however, that the partnership of academia, government and industry is plagued by unseen practices that are ethically or legally suspect.

One way to attack this problem is through a requirement for financial disclosure that the public can see.

Ned Feder
National Institutes of Health,
Two Democracy Plaza, Bethesda,
Maryland 20817, USA