Conflicts of Interest and Corruption

September 7, 2016 By Greg Jefferys

In Australia right now there is a lot of news coverage about some politicians who were getting payments from property developers through a fake “not for profit” organisation. One politician was getting payments from a Chinese company with close ties with the Chinese government. Some of these politicians are facing criminal charges because we all know that property developers only give money to politicians to gain favours.

The politician, a Senator in the Australian Senate, was known for actively campaigning for Chinese interests and even supporting the position of the Chinese government on contentious international matters.

That Senator resigned yesterday when these things became public. Of course he resigned before he was fired.

Jail or dismissal is the correct response to corrupt behaviour because everyone knows that money buys influence, and that influence is used to get decisions that favour the organisation that gives the money. It is as simple as that.

This simple principle applies to politicians, police, customs officials, doctors and professors and other people who have influence. These payments are bribes, nothing is more obvious. It is the elephant in the room that no-one want to talk about when it comes to access to generic Hepatitis C treatment.

But we are not be surprised to know that Big Pharma buys favour with politicians through campaign donations and such. But it is more disturbing to read that they also buy doctors through various “donations” and “grants” and other fronts such as paying for traveling expenses to “conferences” and so forth.

The subject of conflicts of interest and outright corruption has been a general theme of my writing for some months and in the last few weeks I have had a bit of a rant about Hep C advocacy groups who receive funding from Big Pharma, a subject I will return to in another post.

Right now I would like to talk again about corruption in the medical Establishment, where Big Pharma buys the loyalty, the silence or the support of doctors and professors. The article above only touches the tip of the iceberg.

When I first started agitating for greater access to and awareness of generic Hep C treatment I received a phone call from one of Australia’s leading liver specialists. She had seen a television program about what I was doing and rang me to explain why there was so much resistance to generics, even though all the liver doctors in Australia knew that they worked.

She explained that all the big research hospitals and universities, all the professors and specialists, relied on grants from Big Pharma for their research work. She herself had received about $3 million in research grants over the last few years and she stated quite clearly that she would be reluctant to offer public

support for generic Hep C treatment because doing so might seriously jeopardize her access to research grants in the future.
Then there are the “Conferences”.
Every year Big Pharma gives away tens of millions of dollars to pay the traveling expenses and accommodation expenses of most of the world’s top liver specialists.
Is it not surprising that these “conferences” are in exotic tourist locations around the world, where the doctors and professors stay in the best hotels and may or may not attend the occasional conference presentation but certainly will eat out at great restaurants and go to great shows and so on.

How many such “all expenses paid” jaunts does it take to to buy a Professor? Tie it in with a research grant and a few “gifts”... Well one or two a year would be enough, especially if we can travel business class!

So is it any wonder that all the specialists and the head doctors in the liver hospitals in Europe and the Americas all do their best to block access to generics?
It is no surprise at all. Big Pharma has bought them body and soul.
It is such a shame!

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