

## Public reporting of physicians' financial relationships: Policy options

**ISSUE:** Drug and device manufacturers, hospitals, and ambulatory surgical centers (ASCs) frequently have financial relationships with physicians. Payers, patients, and the general public are often not aware of these potential conflicts of interest.

**KEY POINTS:** In the Commission's June 2008 Report to the Congress, we described the financial relationships between drug and device manufacturers and physicians, academic institutions, and medical education organizations. Although these financial ties can lead to advances in medical technology, they may also create conflicts between physicians' obligation to do what is best for their patients and the commercial interests of manufacturers. Requiring manufacturers to publicly report information on their financial relationships with physicians could encourage physicians to reflect on the propriety of those relationships and perhaps discourage inappropriate arrangements.

In our June 2008 Report, we also examined the rapid growth of physician-owned specialty hospitals and ASCs and the evidence that such hospitals are associated with a higher volume of surgeries in a market. Currently, it is difficult for the general public to obtain information about physicians' financial relationships with hospitals and ASCs, such as ownership, joint ventures, and equipment leases.

**ACTION:** Commissioners should provide feedback on the policy options we will present.

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