

United States Senate

COMMITTEE ON FINANCE

WASHINGTON, DC 20510-6200

December 12, 2008

Via Electronic Transmission

Bernard J. Poussot
Chairman, President and Chief Executive Officer
Wyeth
5 Giralda Farms
Madison, New Jersey 07940

Dear Mr. Poussot:

The United States Senate Committee on Finance (Committee) has jurisdiction over the Medicare and Medicaid programs. As a senior member of the United States Senate and as Ranking Member of the Committee, I have a special responsibility to the more than 80 million Americans who receive health care coverage under those programs to ensure that taxpayer and beneficiary dollars are appropriately spent on safe and effective drugs.

Over the last year, the Committee has been examining a practice used by drug companies referred to as “medical ghostwriting.” I have been informed that this practice involves marketing and/or medical education companies that draft outlines and/or manuscripts of review articles, editorials, and/or research papers. This information is then presented to prominent doctors and scientists, particularly those affiliated with academic institutions, to review, edit and sign on as authors, whether or not they are intimately familiar with the underlying data and relevant documentation. In addition, it is not always apparent in the publication that individuals and companies other than the listed authors were deeply involved in the study and/or drafting of the final manuscript.

Articles published in medical journals are widely read by practitioners, and relied upon as being unbiased and scientific in nature. Concerns have been raised, however, that some medical literature may be subtle advertisements rather than publications of independent research. The information in these articles can have a significant impact on doctors’ prescribing behavior and, in turn, on the American taxpayer, because the Medicare and Medicaid programs pay billions of dollars for prescription drugs. Thus, any attempt to manipulate the scientific literature, that can in turn mislead doctors to prescribe drugs that may not work and/or cause harm to their patients, is very troubling.

It was recently alleged that Wyeth has been and may still be engaging in the practice of ghostwriting. Documents from recent lawsuits involving Wyeth’s hormone therapy products have been provided to the Committee, in particular documents relating to articles published in the *American Journal of Obstetrics and Gynecology*, *Obstetrics and Gynecology*, and *Primary Care Update for OB/GYNs*. Based on a review of those

documents, it appears that Wyeth hired a medical communications and education company, DesignWrite Inc., to:

1. Draft manuscripts for reviews regarding the company's hormone therapy products and breast cancer risk; and
2. Seek academic investigators to sign on as the primary author(s).

Accordingly, I request that you provide the Committee with information regarding Wyeth's policies and procedures with respect to ghostwriting. In addition, I would appreciate a response to the following requests. In complying with this request, please respond by repeating the enumerated request, followed by the accompanying response; attach and identify all relevant documents or data by title and the number(s) to which they are responsive.

1. Please provide the Committee with a list of all scientific manuscripts or reports prepared by DesignWrite on behalf of Wyeth for the period of January 1, 1995 through the date of this letter. For each study, research paper or review article, please provide the following information:
 - a. Title of study and/or report and/or review article;
 - b. Brief description;
 - c. Period of time for which the work was done;
 - d. Author(s) who signed his/her name on to the study, research paper and/or review article;
 - e. Payments¹ made to the author(s);
 - f. Extent of involvement/participation of the author(s) in the drafting of the outline and/or final manuscript;
 - g. Journal where study and/or article was published;
 - h. A copy of the article;
 - i. Total payments to DesignWrite for completed work;
 - j. Name of any other third party(ies) that contributed or participated in the development of the study or article and payments made to the third party(ies); and
 - k. A copy of the contract executed between Wyeth and DesignWrite.
2. Please provide all internal and external correspondence, communications and meeting minutes regarding each of the DesignWrite-prepared studies and/or articles identified in Wyeth's response to Request #1.
3. According to the documents received by the Committee, John Eden, MD, is the author listed on the article published in the *American Journal of Obstetrics and Gynecology* entitled, "Progestins and Breast Cancer." The final publication does not identify the original author of the article or mention any support that was provided by Wyeth. In addition, the publication acknowledges Karen Mittleman,

¹ Payments include fees, honoraria, and any other transfers of value.

PhD, and Stephen M. Parker, ELS, for their editorial assistance, but does not identify their affiliation.

- a. Please describe in detail the extent of Dr. Eden's involvement and/or participation in the development and drafting of the final manuscript.
- b. Please identify all individuals at DesignWrite and any other third party(ies) that contributed to the development and/or the initial and final drafts of the manuscript.
- c. Please provide the total amount of payments made to Dr. Eden, DesignWrite, and each individual who contributed either directly or indirectly to the drafting of the published article.
- d. According to the minutes from a "Strategic Publications Development Meeting" dated June 15, 2000, the following Wyeth employees participated in the meeting where Dr. Eden was suggested as the author for the "breast cancer paper questioning the role of progestins as a causative factor":
 - i. Jamie Durocher;
 - ii. Mark Barbee;
 - iii. Steve Strickland;
 - iv. Stephanie Brown; and
 - v. Alice Conti.

Please provide their titles and role in the company. Please also identify any other individuals at Wyeth who were involved in the development and/or drafting and/or editing of the manuscript, including their title and role in the company.

- e. The documents also show that the initial draft of the manuscript was completed by Caron Pruiett. Please explain her affiliation with Wyeth and/or DesignWrite or any other entity.
- f. Based on a review of the documents received by the Committee, it appears that Wyeth marketing employees are involved in discussions of the message and development of scientific manuscripts. According to a trial transcript dated January 26, 2007, Ms. Jeanne Marie Durocher, a Wyeth employee, was asked questions about the June 2000 meeting between Wyeth and DesignWrite. In response to a question whether Wyeth employees in attendance were all in the marketing department, Ms. Durocher stated, "That is correct and unusual." Accordingly, does Wyeth always and/or regularly include its marketing employees in the development of the message of an article for submission to a medical journal?

4. According to the documents received by the Committee, Lila E. Nachtigall, MD, is the author listed on the article published in *Primary Care Update for OB/GYNs* entitled, “Sex Hormone-Binding Globulin and Breast Cancer Risk.” Again, the article acknowledges the editorial assistance of a Dr. Ann Contijoch, but does not identify her affiliation. Based on information provided to the Committee, Dr. Contijoch may have been the original author of the paper.
 - a. According to a letter from Dr. Karen Mittleman to Dr. Nachtigall, it appears that Dr. Nachtigall was not involved in the manuscript until after it was drafted by DesignWrite. Please describe in detail the extent of the involvement/participation of Dr. Nachtigall in the development and/or drafting of the final manuscript.
 - b. Please identify all individuals at DesignWrite and any other third party(ies) that contributed to the development and the initial and final drafts of the manuscript.
 - c. Please provide the total amount of payments made to Dr. Nachtigall, DesignWrite, and each individual who contributed either directly or indirectly to the drafting of the published article.
 - d. Please identify all individuals at Wyeth who were involved in the development and/or drafting and/or editing of the manuscript, including their title and role in the company.
5. According to the documents received by the Committee, Trudy L. Bush, PhD, Maura Whiteman, and Jodi A. Flaws, PhD, are the authors listed on the article published in *Obstetrics and Gynecology* entitled, “Hormone Replacement Therapy and Breast Cancer: A Qualitative Review.” The published article reports that Dr. Bush received honoraria from Wyeth for speaking on this topic. It also acknowledges the assistance of Karen Mittleman, Laura Hirshfield, and Lynn Van Ruiten, but again does not identify their respective affiliations.
 - a. Please describe in detail the extent of the involvement/participation of Dr. Bush, Ms. Whiteman, and Dr. Flaws in the development and/or drafting of the final manuscript.
 - b. Please identify all individuals at DesignWrite and/or any other third party(ies) that contributed to the development and the initial and final drafts of the manuscript.
 - c. Please provide the total amount of payments made to Dr. Bush, Ms. Whiteman, Dr. Flaws, DesignWrite, and all other individuals who contributed to the drafting of the published article.

- d. Please identify all individuals at Wyeth who were involved in the development and/or drafting and/or editing of the manuscript, including their title and role in the company.

6. Please provide the Committee with a list of all scientific manuscripts or reports prepared by each and every company (hereinafter “third party company”), other than DesignWrite, on behalf of Wyeth for any Wyeth human drug for the period of January 1, 2000 through the date of this letter. For each study, research paper or review article, please provide the following information:
 - a. Title of study and/or report and/or review article;
 - b. Brief description;
 - c. Period of time for which the work was done;
 - d. Author(s) who signed his/her name on to the study, research paper and/or review article;
 - e. Payments made to the author(s);
 - f. Extent of involvement/participation of the author(s) in the drafting of the outline and/or final manuscript;
 - g. Journal where study and/or article was published;
 - h. A copy of the article;
 - i. Total payments to the third party company for completed work;
 - j. Name of the third party company(ies) that contributed or participated in the development of the study or article and payments made to the company(ies); and
 - k. A copy of the contract executed between Wyeth and the third party company(ies).

7. Please provide all internal and external correspondence, communications and meeting minutes regarding each of the company-prepared studies and/or articles identified in Wyeth’s response to Request #6.

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

I look forward to hearing from you by no later than January 11, 2009. All documents responsive to this request should be sent electronically, on a disc, in searchable PDF format to Brian_Downey@finance-rep.senate.gov. If you have any questions, please do not hesitate to contact Angela Choy or Paul Thacker at (202) 224-4515.

Sincerely,



Charles E. Grassley
Ranking Member
Committee on Finance

Attachment

GENERAL INSTRUCTIONS

1. The term “Wyeth” means its corporation, or one or more of its divisions, subsidiaries or affiliates, or related entities, including any other companies or corporations with which “Wyeth” entered into a partnership, joint venture or any other business agreement or arrangement.
2. In complying with this document request, produce all responsive documents that are in your possession, custody, or control, whether held by you or your past or present agents, employees, and representatives acting on your behalf. In addition, produce documents that you have a legal right to obtain, documents that you have a right to copy or have access to, and documents that you have placed in the temporary possession, custody, or control of any third party.
3. No documents, records, data or information requested by the Committee shall be destroyed, modified, removed or otherwise made inaccessible to the Committee.
4. If the document request cannot be complied with in full, it shall be complied with to the extent possible, which shall include an explanation of why full compliance is not possible.
5. In complying with this document request, respond to each enumerated request by repeating the enumerated request and identifying the responsive document(s).
6. In the event that a document is withheld on the basis of privilege, provide the following information concerning any such document: (a) the privilege asserted; (b) the type of document; (c) the general subject matter; (d) the date, author and addressee; and (e) the relationship of the author and addressee to each other.
7. Each document produced shall be produced in a form that renders the document susceptible of copying.
8. It shall not be a basis for refusal to produce documents that any other person or entity also possesses non-identical or identical copies of the same document.
9. If any document responsive to this request was, but no longer is, in your possession, custody, or control, identify the document (stating its date, author, subject and recipients) and explain the circumstances by which the document ceased to be in your possession, or control.
10. This request is continuing in nature. Any document, record, compilation of data or information, not produced because it has not been located or discovered by the return date, shall be produced immediately upon location or discovery subsequent thereto.
11. All documents shall be Bates stamped sequentially and produced sequentially.

GENERAL DEFINITIONS

1. The term “document” means any written, recorded, or graphic matter of any nature whatsoever, regardless of how recorded, and whether original or copy, including, but not limited to the following: memoranda, reports, statistical or analytical reports, books, manuals, instructions, financial reports, working papers, records notes, letters, notices, confirmations, telegrams, receipts, appraisals, pamphlets, magazines, newspapers, prospectuses, interoffice and intra office communications, electronic mail (E-mail), contracts, cables, notations of any type of conversation, telephone call, meeting or other communication, bulletins, printed matter, computer printouts, teletypes, invoices, transcripts, diaries, analyses, returns, summaries, minutes, bills, accounts, estimates, projections, comparisons, messages, correspondence, press releases, circulars, financial statements, reviews, opinions, offers, studies and investigations, questionnaires and surveys, and work sheets (and all drafts, preliminary versions, alterations, modifications, revisions, changes, and amendments of any of the foregoing, as well as any attachments or appendices thereto), and graphic or oral records or representations of any kind (including without limitation, photographs, charts, graphs, microfiche, microfilm, videotape, recordings and motion pictures), and electronic, mechanical, and electric records or representations of any kind (including, without limitation, tapes, cassettes, discs, and recordings) and other written, printed, typed, or other graphic or recorded matter of any kind or nature, however produced or reproduced, and whether preserved in writing, film, tape, disc, or videotape. A document bearing any notation not a part of the original text is to be considered a separate document. A draft or non-identical copy is a separate document within the meaning of this term.
2. The term “records” is to be construed in the broadest sense and shall mean any written or graphic material, however produced or reproduced, of any kind or description, consisting of the original and any non-identical copy (whether different from the original because of notes made on or attached to such copy or otherwise) and drafts and both sides thereof, whether printed or recorded electronically or magnetically or stored in any type of data bank, including, but not limited to, the following: correspondence, memoranda, records, summaries of personal conversations or interviews, minutes or records of meetings or conferences, opinions or reports of consultants, projections, statistical statements, drafts, contracts, agreements, purchase orders, invoices, confirmations, telegraphs, telexes, agendas, books, notes, pamphlets, periodicals, reports, studies, evaluations, opinions, logs, diaries, desk calendars, appointment books, tape recordings, video recordings, e-mails, voice mails, computer tapes, or other computer stored matter, magnetic tapes, microfilm, microfiche, punch cards, all other records kept by electronic, photographic, or mechanical means, charts, photographs, notebooks, drawings, plans, inter-office communications, intra-office and intra-departmental communications, transcripts, checks and canceled checks, bank statements, ledgers, books, records or statements of accounts, and papers and things similar to any of the foregoing, however denominated.

3. The terms “relate,” “related,” “relating,” or “regarding” as to any given subject means anything that discusses, concerns, reflects, constitutes, contains, embodies, identifies, deals with, or is any manner whatsoever pertinent to that subject, including but not limited to documents concerning the preparation of other documents.
4. The terms “and” and “or” shall be construed broadly and either conjunctively or disjunctively to bring within the scope of this document request any information which might otherwise be construed to be outside its scope. The singular includes plural number, and vice versa to bring within the scope of this document request any information which might otherwise be construed to be outside its scope. The masculine includes the feminine and neuter genders to bring within the scope of this document request any information that might otherwise be construed to be outside its scope.
5. The term “communication” means each manner or means of disclosure or exchange of information, regardless of means utilized, whether oral, written, electronic, by document or otherwise, and whether face to face, in a meeting, by telephone, mail, telexes, discussions, releases, personal delivery, or otherwise. Documents that typically reflect a “communication” include handwritten notes, telephone memoranda slips, daily appointment books and diaries, bills, checks, correspondence and memoranda, and includes all drafts of such documents.
6. The term “payment” means fees, honoraria, and any other transfers of value.