



Written by [Steven J. DuBord](#) on August 14, 2009

Drug Industry Backs Obama Reform

The Pharmaceutical Research and Manufacturers of America (PhRMA) is prepared to spend \$150 million to support President Barack Obama's healthcare reform efforts, AP reported on August 8. Such a massive amount of money could strongly boost Democratic proposals.

PhRMA would spend the money on a television ad campaign under its own name and on joint commercials with the liberal group known as Families USA. It is also the major contributor to Healthy Economy Now, which recently spent \$12 million on national and state advertising. According to AP, "the ads were made by companies with close ties to Democrats and the White House and generally reflected the administration's changing rhetoric on health care."



Ron Pollack, executive director of Families USA, described the alliance with the drug industry as one of mutual self-interest despite the two sides' disagreements. "We want to achieve coverage for everyone. For PhRMA, this would improve volume for prescription sales because everyone" would have better access to medicine, he said.

Any healthcare bill that is presented to President Obama for his signature can be expected to increase the number of people who are covered by some form of insurance. This could mean millions more prescriptions being filled by those who were formerly uninsured. Drug companies want the new business, and they are willing to invest in ads and to make deals with the White House to get it. Their desire for profit apparently overrides any inclination to take a principled stand for the best interests of the sick Americans who are keeping the drug makers in business.

PhRMA has already agreed with the White House and Senate Finance Committee Chairman Max Baucus (D-Mont.) to absorb \$80 billion in costs over 10 years, but they are anxious to have the administration oppose any further efforts to increase that amount. PhRMA has good reason to be concerned, since Democrats frequently support proposals that work against its interests.

For example, many Democrats in the House and Senate favor importing prescription medication from Canada and other countries, and they also want the government to negotiate directly with pharmaceutical companies to lower drug costs for Medicare. House Speaker Nancy Pelosi (D-Calif.) has criticized drug manufacturers, and Representative Henry Waxman (D-Calif.), chairman of the House Energy and Commerce Committee, said a few weeks ago that the deal between PhRMA and Baucus was not binding on the House.

Still, money talks; in fact, according to AP, it practically shouts: "By the White House tally, overall advertising so far by PhRMA and other supporters of the bill has swamped efforts by opponents.



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Republican strategists concede it would be extremely difficult to match an effort of the size PhRMA is planning.”

Let the viewers of PhRMA’s ad campaign be aware of how willingly the drug companies put their own profits ahead of the best interests of their own customers. Don’t forget that the overdose of commercials supporting Obama’s reform proposals doesn’t necessarily provide the best prescription for America.



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