



## Statement on Direct-to-Consumer Marketing of Prescription Drugs

Direct-to-consumer marketing of prescription drugs should be prohibited.

In 2004, pharmaceutical companies spent more than \$4 billion in an onslaught of advertising to promote prescription drugs. This advertising does not promote public health. It increases the cost of drugs and the number of unnecessary prescriptions, which is expensive to taxpayers, and can be harmful or deadly to patients.

For more than half a century, certain drugs have been available to patients only with a prescription, because all drugs, including those that can heal, can also cause harm. Doctors, nurses and other health professionals have the necessary training and experience to help them decide whether drugs are indicated in particular cases. This is why they make the prescription decision, not patients.

Prescription drug advertising pressures health professionals to prescribe particular medications, and often the ones that may be less effective and more expensive and dangerous. This intrudes in the relationship between medical professionals and patients, and disrupts the therapeutic process. It takes up valuable time to explain to patients why they may have been misled by the drug advertisements they have seen.

Prescription drug advertising is not educational. It is inherently misleading because it features emotive imagery and omits crucial information about drugs and their proper use, as well as about side effects and contraindications that can be found on the full FDA-approved label. Drug companies have an inherent and irredeemable financial conflict-of-interest which drives them to exaggerate the positive and minimize the negative qualities of their own products.

At a minimum, direct-to-consumer prescription drug advertising should not exist unless accompanied by the full FDA-approved label. Nor should drug ads be allowed to display imagery that is primarily emotive and not educational. Drug ads on TV and radio should be prohibited because they cannot meet this standard for truthfulness.

Prominent endorsers include:

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2. John Abramson MD, Clinical Instructor, Ambulatory Care and Prevention, Harvard Medical School; author, *Overdosed America*
3. Maria T. Abreu, MD, Associate Professor of Medicine, Mount Sinai Hospital, Director, Inflammatory Bowel Disease Center
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28. Edward Boyko, MD, Professor of Medicine, School of Medicine, University of Washington

29. Daniel Brauner, MD, Associate Professor of Medicine, Pritzker School of Medicine, The University of Chicago
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35. Deborah Burnet, MD, Associate Professor of Medicine, Pritzker School of Medicine, The University of Chicago
36. Laurence Buxbaum, MD, PhD, Assistant Professor, Department of Medicine, Division of Infectious Diseases, School of Medicine, University of Pennsylvania
37. Anne Cappola, MD, ScM, Assistant Professor of Medicine, School of Medicine, University of Pennsylvania
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40. Alan Cassels, drug policy researcher, University of Victoria; co-author, *Selling Sickness*
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44. Paul R. Chelminski, MD, MPH, Assistant Professor of Medicine, Department of Medicine, School of Medicine, University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill, Division of General Medicine and Clinical Epidemiology
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47. Kari Christianson, Program Director, DES Action
48. Chuhan Chung, MD, Assistant Professor of Medicine, Section of Digestive Diseases, School of Medicine, Yale University
49. JP Clancy, MD, Director of Pediatric Pulmonary Medicine, University of Alabama at Birmingham
50. James F. Cleary, MD, Associate Professor of Medicine, School of Medicine, University of Wisconsin
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54. Russell D. Cohen, MD, FACP, Associate Professor of Medicine, Pritzker School of Medicine, The University of Chicago
55. Andreas Cohrssen, MD, Assistant Professor, Department of Family and Social Medicine, Albert Einstein College of Medicine, Yeshiva University
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59. Nereida Correa, MD, Associate Clinical Professor of Obstetrics and Gynecology, Albert Einstein College of Medicine, Yeshiva University, Montefiore Medical Center
60. Farr A. Curtin, MD, Assistant Professor, Section of General Internal Medicine and the MacClean Center for Clinical Medical Ethics, Pritzker School of Medicine, The University of Chicago
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69. Linda Emanuel, MD, PhD, Buehler Professor of Geriatric Medicine, Director, The Buehler Center on Aging, Principal, The Education on Palliative and End-of-life Care (EPEC) Project, Feinberg School of Medicine, Northwestern University
70. James Evans, MD, PhD, Associate Professor of Medicine, School of Medicine, University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill
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72. Christopher Fee, MD, Assistant Clinical Professor of Medicine, Division of Emergency Medicine, University of California, San Francisco
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76. David A. Fleming, M.D., FACP, Associate Professor of Medicine and Director, Center for Health Ethics, Department of Health Management and Informatics, School of Medicine, University of Missouri
77. Kevin Flemmons, MD, Assistant Professor of Clinical Medicine, School of Medicine, University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill

78. Auguste H. Fortin VI, MD, MPH, Assistant Professor, Department of Internal Medicine, School of Medicine, Yale University
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95. Jeffrey Hagen, MD, Assistant Professor of Surgery, Keck School of Medicine, University of Southern California; Chief, Thoracic/Foregut Surgery LAC & USC Medical Center
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130. M. Bruce Lindsay, MD, Associate Professor of Medicine, Section of Emergency Medicine, School of Medicine, University of Wisconsin
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133. Matt LoConte, MD, Clinical Assistant Professor of Medicine, School of Medicine, University of Wisconsin
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151. Judy Norsigian, Executive Director of Our Bodies Ourselves; Co-founder, Boston Women's Health Book Collective

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206. Knox Todd, MD, MPH, Professor of Emergency Medicine, Director, Pain and Emergency Medicine Institute, Department of Emergency Medicine, Beth Israel Medical Center, Albert Einstein College of Medicine, Yeshiva University

207. Michael Touger, MD, Associate Professor of Clinical Emergency Medicine and Clinical Family and Social Medicine, Albert Einstein College of Medicine, Yeshiva University
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218. Lisa Winston, MD, Assistant Clinical Professor, Department of Medicine, School of Medicine, University of California, San Francisco; Hospital Epidemiologist, San Francisco General Hospital
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224. Teresa L. Wright, MD, Professor of Medicine, School of Medicine, University of California, San Francisco; Chief, Gastroenterology Section, Veterans Affairs Medical Center
225. Ernie Yoder, MD, PhD, FACP, Chair, Department of Internal Medicine, Providence Hospital & Medical Centers, American College of Physicians Governor for Michigan
226. Zdravka Zafirova, MD, Assistant Professor of Medicine, Pritzker School of Medicine, The University of Chicago