

United States Senate

SPECIAL COMMITTEE ON AGING

WASHINGTON, DC 20510-6400

(202) 224-5364

July 22, 2008

W. Douglas Weaver, M.D., F.A.C.C.
President
American College of Cardiology
Heart House
2400 N Street NW
Washington, DC 20037

Dear Dr. Weaver:

As Chairman of the United States Senate Special Committee on Aging, I take very seriously my responsibility to protect America's seniors. One part of that responsibility is working to ensure that seniors have access to accurate and unbiased information concerning their health care needs. Critical to this goal is the information they receive from their doctors. To that end, the Committee has conducted several hearings studying the financial relationships between physicians and medical device and pharmaceutical manufacturers. This series of hearings led to the drafting of the Physician Payments Sunshine Act, which is currently before the Senate Finance Committee. The legislation would provide for transparency in the relationship between physicians and manufacturers of drugs, devices, or medical supplies for which payment is made under Medicare, Medicaid, or SCHIP.

With that background, I was interested to learn that the American College of Cardiology (ACC) has entered into a five-year partnership with the Cardiovascular Research Foundation (CRF). My understanding is that one of the purposes of this partnership is to develop the component of the ACC Annual Scientific Session concerning catheter based treatments for structural heart diseases. According to its own website, the CRF receives funding from a variety of medical device manufacturers. The potential for this partnership to influence clinical practice raises questions concerning the continued impartiality of your organization. All Americans and particularly seniors need to have confidence in the health recommendations of their physicians. Therefore, the growing links between organizations such as the ACC and industry advocacy groups warrant special attention.

In an effort to learn more about the ACC's relationship with the CRF, I am requesting that your organization provide the following information to the Committee:

1. An explanation of the events and conditions surrounding the establishment of the partnership between the ACC and the CRF.

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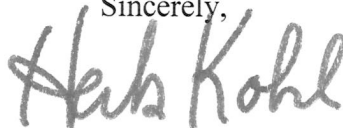
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2. Copies of any formal agreements documenting the terms of the partnership between the ACC and the CRF.
3. An accounting of any financial exchanges between the ACC and the CRF over the past five years. This accounting should include, but should not necessarily be limited to:
 - a. Any contracts to which both the ACC and the CRF are parties.
 - b. Any transfers of funds between the ACC and the CRF.
 - c. Any transfer of funds done at the request of either the ACC or the CRF for the benefit of a third party. This should include: 1) transfer requests made by the ACC to the CRF for the benefit of a third party and 2) transfer requests made by the CRF to the ACC for the benefit of a third party.
4. A list of any board members or other organizational officers who have served or are currently serving both the ACC and the CRF within the past five years.
5. A list of all financial contributors to your organization who are members of or representatives of the medical device manufacturing industry.

Please respond fully to this request by close of business on August 5, 2008. Feel free to contact Adam Weaver or Jack Mitchell of my staff at (202) 224-5364 with any questions you may have concerning this request.

Sincerely,



Herb Kohl
Chairman