

# SCIALLI CONSULTING

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Maryland General Assembly  
House of Delegates Health Committee  
90 State Circle  
Annapolis, MD 21401

## **Testimony in Favor of HB 1133, Public Health - Drug Manufacturer-Funded Disease Awareness Campaigns - Registration and Required Disclosure**

I am a physician who saw patients and lived in in Maryland for 25 years. I have more than 50 years of experience interacting with pharmaceutical companies. Indeed, when I graduated medical school in 1975, my first black bag, grained leather monogrammed with my name and my new degree, was provided as a gift by Lilly, a pharmaceutical company. I have performed pharmaceutical company-supported research, been paid to give lectures for pharmaceutical companies, and received consulting fees from pharmaceutical companies. Although my income has been derived in part from pharmaceutical companies, I recognize that these companies sometimes use what I consider deceptive marketing practices.

As a professor at Georgetown University Medical Center, one of my responsibilities was to run the bone density service, operating a bone densitometer used for the diagnosis of low bone density. Among the sources of information available to me was a consumer organization called the National Osteoporosis Foundation (now called the Bone Health & Osteoporosis Foundation). I did not realize at the time that this organization was started by and funded, at least in part, by the pharmaceutical industry. Even today, the web site of the Bone Health & Osteoporosis Foundation has only a small disclaimer at the bottom of the home page, "In order to accomplish its mission, BHOF accepts support from a wide breadth of diversified sources, including individuals, foundations, government sources and corporations."

At the time I was performing and interpreting bone density studies, I noticed that the recommendations from the National Osteoporosis Foundation encouraged the overuse of bone densitometry and the overuse of medications as a first-line approach to a low bone densitometer results. I have since learned that this approach is not the only reasonable approach to assessing and maintaining bone health, and I subsequently offered my patients a range of unmedicated options in the approach to their bone health.

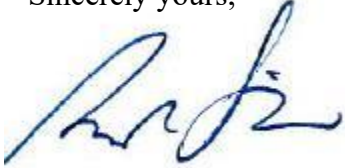
I have had other experiences with pharmaceutical company-sponsored patient organizations. I know now to mistrust the messaging of these groups, but other health care providers and consumers may misinterpret this messaging as science rather than as marketing. In scientific journals, it is mandatory that authors of articles reveal their funding sources so readers can evaluate possible bias. No less should be required of other sources of information or sometimes

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misinformation. The pushing of costly tests and treatments is an important source of rising healthcare costs for Maryland residents.<sup>1</sup> In some cases, the demand for costly tests and treatments originates with the consumer as a result of mis-education by consumer organizations that are, in reality, fronts for pharmaceutical marketing.

I encourage you to support HB 1133, which will expose the sources of support for putative consumer organizations offering information to the public about diseases and treatments.

Sincerely yours,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read 'Anthony R. Scialli', written in a cursive style.

Anthony R. Scialli, M.D.  
Scialli Consulting LLC

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<sup>1</sup> <https://www.investopedia.com/articles/personal-finance/080615/6-reasons-healthcare-so-expensive-us.asp#:~:text=Healthcare%20in%20the%20United%20States&text=Most%20of%20the%20costs%20involved,contrast%20to%20other%20Western%20nations.>