

Doctor urges colleagues to disclose conflicts of interest

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(HealthDay)—A campaign to encourage physicians to disclose potential conflicts of interest has sparked ire from doctors despite evidence that openness improves the doctor-patient relationship, according to a personal view piece published online Jan. 15 in *BMJ*.

Leana Wen, M.D., from George Washington University in Washington, D.C., discusses her campaign to recruit doctors to publish their financial disclosures on a website. She notes that, according to a *New England Journal of Medicine* study, 94 percent of U.S. doctors have some relationship with a drug or medical device company.

Wen stresses that her campaign was established to promote transparency, but found that many doctors oppose her call for renewed

professionalism. Much criticism is based on fear of undermining trust in the therapeutic relationship. However, research has shown that openness leads to more trust, improved patient-physician communications, and better patient adherence to treatment recommendations. Efforts toward transparency include the U.S. Open Payments Act, which will require drug companies to disclose payments to [doctors](#), and encouragement from the Association of American Medical Colleges that academic physicians disclose conflicts to patients.

"Establishing trust is a critical part of care, and being honest with our patients is at the core of what it means to be a doctor," Wen writes.

"Doctors should be mandated to disclose how their personal incentives could affect [treatment recommendations](#) as part of obtaining informed consent."

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