

The Truth  *About Health*

PHARMACEUTICAL INDUSTRY SPENDS BILLIONS TO TEACH EVERY U.S. CITIZEN TO “TAKE THEIR MEDICINE”

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A study by researchers at the Stanford Center for Research in Disease Prevention provided the first detailed picture of the pharmaceutical industry’s drug advertising and promotion efforts, estimating that the industry spent \$12.7 billion promoting its products in 1998.

“Knowing that drug promotion is done primarily for marketing — not education — physicians and the public need to analyze this information more objectively and be more proactive in seeking out information” about the products being promoted, explained the author of the study.

Here’s how the budget broke down: Those free samples you get from your doctor accounted for \$6.6 billion of their advertising budget, representing 51.9 percent of the drug promotion expenditures.

Direct contact between drug-industry representatives and doctors in their offices — known as “detailing” — totaled \$3.5 billion, accounting for 27.8 percent of corporate marketing outlay. Ads in medical journals totaled \$540 million, or 4.3 percent of the budget.

Consumer-targeted drug ads totaled \$1.3 billion in 1998, representing 10.5 percent of all drug promotion expenditures. It’s only been since 1983 that pharmaceutical companies were allowed to advertise directly to consumers. According to Dr. Gary Null, “By 1995, drug companies had tripled the amount of money allotted to direct advertising of prescription drugs to consumers. The majority of the money is spent on seductive television ads. From 1996 to 2000, spending rose from \$791 million to nearly \$2.5 billion.”

All told, in 1998, Big Pharma spent \$46.00 for every man, woman, and child in the United States, just to make sure that everyone knows to take their medicine. And you can bet that the figure has risen every year since.

SOURCE: Sources: <http://news-service.stanford.edu/news/2003/may21/pharma.html>, Death by Medicine, a report from Dr. Gary Null, www.garynull.com.