

Opening the Senate's sealed opioid report

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“Release the report, senators. Americans deserve to know who created the national scourge of opioid addiction.”

[Cutting and concise words from Paul D. Thacker](#), a former investigator on the United States Senate Finance Committee. Thacker witnessed his father slip into opioid dependency quite unwittingly, he says, as well as two cousins die from opioid addiction. In his lengthy opinion article to Business Insider, he details what’s being kept from the American people, why, and why we need the closure that the information would provide.

The closure in disclosure

“As a former investigator who helped the Senate Finance Committee uncover corruption in science and medicine, I know firsthand the hard work that goes into these inquiries. Making information public can change policy, without needing to pass new laws. The public, the press, and lawmakers deserve to know what the committee learned about how the drug industry influenced opioid prescribing practices.”

Thacker affirms sharing findings from the committee's 2012 investigative report into financial ties between drug manufacturers and medical organizations would reveal the continued promotion of opioid dependency.

Thacker says that in 2015, dozens of public health advocates [petitioned](#) to release the discoveries of the pharmaceutical opioid strategy report. Their top reason? Several of the companies and nonprofit groups named in the report "have continued to promote aggressive opioid use and continue to block federal and state interventions that could reduce overprescribing."

The facts

- The report was conducted in 2012
- The 2015 public health advocate's petition to release the findings was not granted
- The investigation's sponsors: Senate Finance Committee chair Max Baucus and ranking member Chuck Grassely both left the Senate Finance Committee before releasing the report
- The evidence compiled over nearly a year – as well as the subsequent report – have never been revealed to the public. They remain sealed in the office of the Senate Finance Committee
- The two committee members who launched the investigation were succeeded by Senators Orrin Hatch and Ron Wyden, as the Senate Finance Committee chair and ranking Democrat, respectively
- Instead of publicizing of the investigation's findings, Hatch and Wyden are sponsoring new legislation aimed to buffer the societal impact of opioid addiction

Report name drops; targeted have ties

The report implicates:

- Purdue Pharma
- Endo Pharmaceuticals
- Johnson & Johnson

- Nonprofit group American Pain Foundation
- Nonprofit group Center for Practical Bioethics

According to Thacker, the American Pain Foundation's "guidance on opioid use for patients and policymakers exaggerated the benefits of these drugs while downplaying the risks." Thacker adds, "At one point, pharmaceutical and medical device companies provided 90 percent of the [American Pain Foundation's] funding."

Thacker also points to a Kansas City Star investigative article noting [Purdue Pharma padded the Center for Practical Bioethics](#) group with all manner of funding and perks.

In 2012 alone, nearly 260 million prescriptions for opioid painkillers were written; at least one prescription for every adult in the country.

The knowledge of the truth will set you free

Sovereign Health is mindful of three truths: addiction is a brain disease, prescription dependency is just as deadly as illicit drugs and treatment must be as unique as the individual's path which led to addiction.

Sovereign Health customizes treatment for addiction, mental and eating disorders and [dual diagnosis for co-occurring conditions](#). We provide holistic detox, cognitive and alternative therapies to cultivate lasting wellness. If your or your loved one is struggling with opioid addiction please contact us via our 24/7 helpline to learn how we can help you.

About the author

Sovereign Health Group staff writer Kristin Currin-Sheehan is a mindful spirit swimming in metaphysical pools with faith as her compass. Her cover: a 30s-something Cinderella breadwinner of an all-sport blended family. Her repertoire includes writing poetry, lifestyle articles and TV news; editing, radio production and on-camera reporting. For more information and other inquiries about this media, contact the author at news@sovhealth.com.