



US senators question telehealth deals with Big Pharma

Article

The news: A group of US senators wants answers from telehealth companies about their financial relationships with **Pfizer** and **Eli Lilly**'s direct-to-consumer platforms, per STAT.

Sens. Dick Durbin, Elizabeth Warren, Bernie Sanders, and Peter Welch sent letters to five telehealth companies. The senators are concerned the deals between telehealth providers and pharma companies seem designed to push patients toward prescriptions for Pfizer and Lilly

drug brands and potentially violate anti-kickback laws. The same senators [sent letters](#) to Pfizer and Lilly with similar questions in October.

The problem: The senators asked for details on compensation, data sharing and prescribing practices for D2C platforms [PfizerForAll](#) and [LilyDirect](#).

The scrutiny focuses on financial details and conflicts of interest:

- Compensation questions ask for specific payments, fair market value of services, co-pay and consultation fees, fulfillment or refill requirements, and any bonuses for achieving those.
- The senators want to know if the pharma companies communicate or consult with the telehealth physicians, if physicians know if the referrals come from the pharma platforms, and how many patients receive Pfizer or Lilly prescriptions.

Yes, but: Telehealth and pharma tie-ups are picking up steam despite heightened scrutiny.

- **UpScript Health**, a leading telehealth provider and one of the recent letter recipients, has more than 100 deals in its pipeline, its CEO told Healthcare IT News last month.