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Health, Drug Lobbying Slows After Big-Spending Start to Year (2)

The largest pharmaceutical and doctors lobbies pulled back on their spending in the second quarter of 2018, laying out \$5.54 million and \$4.3 million, respectively, according to lobbying disclosures.

Instead of continuing their surge in spending of \$9.96 million and \$6.59 million from the first three months of 2018, the Pharmaceutical Research and Manufacturers of America and the American Medical Association returned to similar levels of spending as in 2017. The decrease in spending in the second quarter could be due to the lack of expected significant health legislation, a health-care lobbyist told Bloomberg Law.

The increased spending in the first quarter was likely due to efforts to influence health-care measures included in the omnibus spending bill passed in March, the lobbyist said.

Unlike the AMA and PhRMA, lobbying spending by the Biotechnology Innovation Organization hit a five-year high in 2018 for a single quarter, rising to \$2.52 million.

The AMA focused its efforts on gun violence research, funding for the National Institutes of Health, oversight of tobacco products by the Food and Drug Administration, telehealth provisions in the 2018 budget, the proposed CVS-Aetna merger, and opioid abuse, among others.

PhRMA continued its focus on drug pricing, opioid abuse, and patent reforms.

Individual pharmaceutical companies Amgen, Merck, Novartis, Pfizer, and Sanofi also decreased their spending from the first part of the year.

Sanofi and Pfizer spent almost half of what they paid in the first quarter of 2018, down to \$1.1 million from \$2 million, and \$1.9 million from \$4.65 million, respectively.

Merck and Novartis spent almost one-quarter of what they paid in the first part of 2018, down to \$830,000 from \$3.31 million, and \$860,000 from \$3.28 million.

There was a slight decrease in spending from the American Hospital Association to \$4.29 million from a two-year high of \$4.96 million.

America's Health Insurance Plans, which represents insurers, also pulled back on its spending to \$1.41 million from \$2.28 million, less than it has spent in every quarter since the end of 2016.

Anthem Inc., a member of AHIP, decreased its spending from \$1.35 million at the beginning of the year to \$930,000.

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