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## More Medical Schools Beef Up Conflicts Policies

More medical schools are improving their conflict-of-interest policies to police their ties with drug and medical-device makers. But more than half the schools still have inadequate policies or no policies at all.

That's according to the latest ratings from the American Medical Student Association and the Pew Prescription Project, which grade medical schools on such policies.

Forty-five, or a third, of medical schools rated earned a "A" or "B" grade on the latest [AMSA PharmFree Scorecard](#), which means the school made "a serious attempt to think and address the appropriate relationship of medical faculty to the pharmaceutical and medical-device industry," Allan Coukell, director of the [Pew Prescription Project](#), told the Health Blog. [Last year](#), just 21 schools were awarded one of these top grades.

Coukell said that outside pressure — for instance, from Sen. Charles Grassley (see [here](#) for more) — spurred some schools to implement or beef up their policies. "At the same time, I think there was a real [internal] recognition that the status quo was unacceptable," said Coukell.

The groups' goal isn't to sever relationships between the academic medical community and the private sector, which are needed to advance new technology. he told the Health Blog. Rather, "we are looking for appropriate relationships," Coukell said. In particular, company marketing should become less of a driver of prescribing, Coukell told the Health Blog. Gifts, free meals and paying doctors to be on speaker's bureaus are undesirable in the groups' eyes.

"We're seeing genuine progress and that's heartening," Coukell said. "On the other hand, there are a lot of schools that are yet to look seriously at these issues."

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