

NIH scientists made \$710M in royalties from drug makers -- a fact they tried to hide

As Dr. Fauci wraps five decades in government having become its highest-paid bureaucrat, he should consider ticking those boxes again. For old times' sake.

By Adam Andrzejewski

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During the pandemic, the American people started to feel that Big Government was very cozy with Big Pharma.

Now we know just how close they were.

New data from the National Institutes of Health reveal the agency and its scientists collected \$710 million in royalties during the pandemic, from late 2021 through 2023. These are payments made by private companies, like pharmaceuticals, to license medical innovations from government scientists.

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Getty Images

Almost all that cash — \$690 million — went to the National Institute of Allergy and Infectious Diseases, the subagency led by Dr. Anthony Fauci, and 260 of its scientists.

Information about this vast private royalty complex is tightly held by the National Institutes of Health (NIH). My organization, OpenTheBooks.com, was forced to sue to uncover the royalties paid from September 2009 to October 2021, [which amounted to \\$325 million](#) over 56,000 transactions.

We had to sue a second time, with Judicial Watch as our counsel, to pry open this new release.

Payments skyrocketed during the pandemic era: Those years saw more than double the amount of cash flow to NIH from the private sector, compared to the prior 12 combined. All told, it's \$1.036 billion.

It's unclear if any of the COVID vaccine royalties from Pfizer and Moderna, the latter of which [settled with NIH by agreeing to pay \\$400 million](#), is even included in these new numbers. NIH isn't saying.

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The American people have one last crack at getting some candor from Fauci, the face of our COVID response, when he testifies Monday before the House Select Subcommittee on the Coronavirus Pandemic.

There's plenty to answer for.

He's spent years scoffing at questions about potential conflicts of interest between COVID policymakers, who relentlessly pushed vaccines, and recipients of private royalties.

Now he'll also need to account for [bombshell emails](#) sent by one of his deputies, which described in-house strategies to circumvent the federal Freedom of Information Act.

Fauci won't be able to misspell words to evade scrutiny or have folks physically courier messages — just two of the FOIA-avoiding actions described by Dr. David Morens, a key Fauci deputy.

Instead, cameras from around the world will be trained on Fauci and he'll be answering for information he gave in a sworn deposition earlier this year.

Sen. Rand Paul has sponsored the Royalty Transparency Act, which sailed through the committee process and deserves a floor vote immediately. Getty Images

It's a chance to either come clean or further cement the public's perception of him and the NIH as secretive and self-interested.

Beyond this small cabal of scientists covering up discussions of the virus's origin, NIH has consistently treated FOIA requests like viral attacks on their own. No wonder, then, that we're plaintiffs in six ongoing FOIA cases.

Characteristically, NIH is still redacting pieces of the data that would help us more easily connect therapeutics with their government-paid inventors. For example, they refuse to show us the amount of royalties paid to each individual scientist. So we still can't entirely follow the money.

In the meantime, Sen. Rand Paul (R-Ky.) has sponsored the [Royalty Transparency Act](#), which sailed unanimously through the committee process and deserves a floor vote immediately.

There's plenty Fauci could do in the meantime, too. He could indicate he supports bills like Paul's. He could call on NIH and the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention to voluntarily "unmask" the royalty payments. Then we could

see whether their decisions have advanced the general welfare or their own.

Fauci could also support fixes to the FOIA law that create real consequences for those who purposely violate it.

At minimum, he must apologize for the utter contempt for FOIA, and the transparency war waged by his colleagues that's now been revealed in private communications.

Among the government's most basic duties to the public are providing for the general welfare and reporting its income and spending.

As Fauci wraps five decades in government having become its highest-paid bureaucrat, he should consider ticking those boxes again. For old times' sake.

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