

Talking Points: National Pharmaceutical Council Poll, “Employer perspective on what’s wrong with the management of prescription drug benefits and how to fix it.”

The National Pharmaceutical Council (NPC), an organization funded by brand drug manufacturers, has released a biased new “employer poll” as part of a multi-million dollar campaign by drugmakers to shift attention away from the high prices they set toward pharmacy benefit managers (PBMs), the only entities in the drug supply chain tasked with negotiating lower drug costs for payers and consumers.

Why are drugmakers experts on what payers want in a drug benefit? The first thing employers want is for drugmakers to charge less.

The “employer poll” was conducted by a consulting firm, Gallagher, that itself advises employers on their drug benefits. In fact, the more Gallagher is able to generate uncertainty among employers about their drug benefits and PBMs, the more it’s able to generate potential new clients for itself. Not surprisingly, the report presents selected data to generate uncertainty.

In contrast, a separate and much larger poll of 400 small business owners and medium-to-large business executives by North Star Opinion Research finds:

- 95% are satisfied with the company that manages their prescription drug benefits.
- A majority say that drug companies bear most of the responsibility for increasing drug costs.
- Just 4% said contracting issues such as the “transparency” of rebates to PBMs were their top concern.

Major problems with the NPC/Gallagher “employer poll” include:

- Its biased title clearly indicates the authors had a predetermined conclusion: “Employer perspectives on *what’s wrong* with the management of prescription drug benefits and *how to fix it*.”
- Benefit consultant responsible for the poll has a financial stake in the outcome.
- “Poll” had small sample size of just 88 employers.
- Only partial and selected results that support its predetermined conclusion are presented in the report.
- The full survey instrument itself is not included in the report, making it impossible to ensure the questions were not biased toward the study sponsor’s desired conclusion.