

Part 4:
U.S. gov't probe: 'potential conflicts of interest'

In November 2000, media reported that Congress would look into "potential conflicts of interest" impacting development of scientific understanding about Lyme.

"The investigative arm of Congress is expected to complete a report later this month," the Newark [New Jersey] Star Ledger reported on May 13, 2001, "outlining potential conflicts of interest at government agencies that shaped the diagnosis and treatment of Lyme disease."

Marcia Crosse, the General Accounting Office (GAO) assistant director for public health, assured, "We're looking at federal activities and procedures. As part of that, we're examining conflicts of interest among agency employees and advisors."

The article continued, "Among the issues reviewed by the GAO have been CDC and NIH research spending, the types of grants issued and reviewed by the NIH, and whether federal officials had ties to doctors at state levels, according to congressional sources."

The article continued, "The General Accounting Office probe--centering on the National Institutes of Health (NIH), the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), and the Food and Drug Administration (FDA)--reflects growing concern that basic research conducted by government and academic institutions is increasingly influenced by a cash-rich pharmaceutical industry."

This promise by the GAO to "look" at the matter, was, "the first to address criticism that federal agencies failed to devote sufficient resources to manage the disease"

The article concluded, "Whether Congress will follow it up with legislation remains to be seen."

Next: Gov't, corporate drive for Lyme patent