

Johnson & Johnson Shareholder Meeting Question
David Almasi, Vice President
The National Center for Public Policy Research, April 25, 2019

I'm David Almasi of the National Center for Public Policy Research.

I want to ask you about Johnson & Johnson's membership in a controversial organization.

On its website, the Institute for Clinical Review (or "ICER") lists Johnson & Johnson as one of its funders.ⁱ ICER was founded by Dr. Steven Pearson. Pearson previously worked with the United Kingdom's National Institute for Health and Care Excellence (NICE).

Thanks to NICE guidelines, millions of British citizens are on waiting lists at any given time for procedures, hundreds of thousands are waiting for basic diagnostic tests, and thousands of operations are regularly cancelled. *The Guardian* recently reported that patients in Britain "who are losing their sight are being forced to wait for months before having eye cataracts removed because" of "imposed restrictions on patients' access to cataract surgery in more than half of England."ⁱⁱ That's not very nice. That sounds a lot like the left's Medicare-for-All plan.

And that's exactly what Dr. Pearson and ICER are hoping to replicate here in the United States. One way ICER is working to ration care is by teaming up with retail pharmacies such as CVS and instituting subjective "cost-effectiveness" thresholds. Former U.S. Rep. Tony Coelho (D-Calif.), a primary author and sponsor of the Americans with Disabilities Act, explained the real-world effect of this scheme, noting:

This type of cost effectiveness analysis discriminates against people with disabilities and other vulnerable groups like the elderly because it assigns higher value to people in "perfect health" than people in less-than-perfect health. So let's say your child has a degenerative neurological condition and an expensive new drug is introduced that can halt, but not reverse, the damage done by the disease. Your child, and other patients like her, would be considered "worth less" under a cost-effectiveness formula. As a result, the new treatment would not meet the threshold.ⁱⁱⁱ

Can you explain how funding ICER benefits Johnson & Johnson, and whether this funding fits within the company's credo?

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ⁱ <https://icer-review.org/about/support/>

ⁱⁱ <https://www.theguardian.com/politics/2019/mar/20/nhs-england-restricts-patients-access-to-cataract-removal>

ⁱⁱⁱ https://www.realclearhealth.com/articles/2018/08/30/patients_harmed_by_cost-effectiveness_measures_110821.html