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LETTERS TO THE EDITOR - THE AGE

Dear Editor,

Doctors Stanley, Haines and Brady are to be commended for speaking out about the cancer drugs 'gravy train' (2 May 2006). But good quality information and care are the meat and potatoes as far as consumers are concerned.

Health consumers generally rely on their doctors for accurate and unbiased medical information. Research shows that providing good information to consumers that is based on evidence enables them to share in decision-making about their care, and that this leads to better health outcomes. Consumers therefore expect their doctors to be influenced by sound evidence, rather than marketing, especially when costs and stakes are so high.

Further, as with some media personality's 'cash for comment' approach, it is similarly unethical and misleading for health professionals not to reveal any close connection with drug companies. Consumers and taxpayers are also entitled to demand more transparency about the high cost of many lifesaving drugs.

Sounds like we need more jelly and less gravy.

Tony McBride, CEO
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