

## Talking Points for *Side Effects: A Best-Selling Drug on Trial*

- Your book tells the story of how a maverick prosecutor for New York State Attorney General Eliot Spitzer sued the second largest pharmaceutical company in the world (GlaxoSmithKline) and exposed a shameful pattern of deception in the making of a blockbuster drug (Paxil). What motivated this particular prosecutor [Rose Firestein] to take on the powerful pharmaceutical industry?
- As it turns out, GlaxoSmithKline was not the only drug maker to deceive the American public. In your book, you cite evidence showing that medical researchers and their corporate sponsors knew as far back as the '90s that Paxil and other antidepressants, known as selective serotonin release inhibitors (SSRIs), caused suicidal thoughts and behaviors in some children. Why was this information covered up?
- You also show how antidepressants such as Prozac, Paxil and Zoloft became widely prescribed for children and adolescents even though there was little evidence that they worked in the pediatric population. How did this happen?
- In your book, you tell the story of how Dr. Martin Teicher, one of the first psychiatrists to speak out about the side effects of these drugs, saw his reputation dragged through the mud. He came close to losing his medical license and endured a lengthy legal battle. What eventually happened to Teicher?
- Your book reveals, for the first time, that a former president of the board for the powerful National Alliance for the Mentally Ill (NAMI) did not disclose the fact that he was receiving thousands of dollars in personal income from the drug industry at the same time he was acting as a leading patient advocate and spokesman. Can you tell us more about this?
- Your book explores the longstanding collusion between the medical establishment and the pharmaceutical industry, specifically in terms of the lucrative personal payments that drug manufacturers make to many key opinion leaders (KOLs) in medicine? What particular example do you focus on in the book?
- Your book reveals for the first time that the authors of an influential Paxil trial in adolescents misrepresented data so as to minimize the risks of the drug. This mischaracterization of data allowed GlaxoSmithKline to mislead physicians and consumers about Paxil and perpetuate fraud, as defined by New York State law. How did this happen?
- In your book, you also tell the story of a single mother who discovered that her boss, a prominent medical researcher, was misrepresenting data in several research studies. What motivated this woman to speak up and risk losing her job?
- You show how Rose Firestein and other prosecutors in Spitzer's office built their case against GlaxoSmithKline upon the clues left by this whistle blower at the research university, Dr. Martin Teicher, as well as other brave individuals. They

found evidence, for instance, that GlaxoSmithKline, the maker of Paxil, deliberately with-held negative findings about the drug while promoting one study that appeared to show positive results. Tell me more about what they found and how that constitutes consumer fraud.

- Under the terms of its settlement with the New York State Attorney General in August 2004, GlaxoSmithKline had to publicly post the results of all its clinical trials from 2000 onward. That mandate led to an important discovery about the dangerous side effects of Avandia, another drug manufactured by Glaxo. Tell me more about the Avandia case.
- The NYSAG's lawsuit against GlaxoSmithKline led to a number of reforms in the entire industry. Just last year, for instance, Congress passed a law requiring all drug makers to publicly disclose the results of their clinical drug trials. Prior to that, companies did not have to disclose negative findings from drug trials. What other reforms have followed in the wake of the AG's legal action?

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