

## **Majority Leader Matt Ritter's Ties to Boehringer Ingelheim Could Benefit his Employer Shipman and Goodwin as well as his Father's Employer Brown Rudnick if his Vaccine Legislation Passes**

- Majority Leader Ritter is a partner at Shipman and Goodwin. One of Shipman's many areas of practice is "Life Sciences," and according to their website includes<sup>1</sup>
  - Working with "special counsel on FDA regulatory approvals"
  - "Intellectual property and trade secrets"
  - "Research, development, and commercialization of products and services"
- Shipman and Goodwin represents pharmaceutical giant and Ridgefield-based Boehringer Ingelheim, and recently successfully defended them in a major case alleging their blood-thinning drug Pradaxa caused severe internal bleeding in the plaintiff.<sup>2</sup>
- Rep. Ritter is attempting to overturn the religious exemption for vaccines used by 1.4% of Connecticut schoolchildren. He is doing this at the same time that his firm's client Boehringer Ingelheim (BI) appears to be entering the human vaccine market<sup>3,4,5</sup> They are involved in cancer vaccines and a flu vaccine for immunocompromised patients.
- The flu vaccine is recommended for all children aged 6 months and above and required for entry to Connecticut daycares. Children do not mount as robust of an immune response to vaccines as compared with adults. Could BI develop a flu vaccine that would be the answer to suboptimal influenza protection in young children? Will BI develop additional vaccines that could eventually be mandated for school attendance?
- BI is also a partner of the Human Vaccines Project<sup>6</sup>, which lists veteran vaccinologist and rubella vaccine developer Stanley Plotkin, MD as a board member.<sup>7</sup> They obviously have a commitment to human vaccine development.
- Will legal services provided by Shipman and Goodwin help bring BI's human vaccines to market and result in a large revenue stream for the firm?
- In addition, Rep. Ritter's father, Thomas Ritter, is a partner at Brown Rudnick, a law and lobbying firm, which also represents Boehringer Ingelheim and the Healthcare Distribution Alliance, which describes itself as "the national organization representing primary pharmaceutical distributors."<sup>8</sup>
- While Boehringer Ingelheim is entering the human vaccine market it is also developing new drugs to treat autoimmune and autoinflammatory diseases. Autoimmune diseases affect an estimated 50 million Americans and the NIH estimates their related health care cost to be approximately \$100 billion annually.<sup>9</sup> Three of the top six best-selling prescription drugs in 2015 were biologics used to treat autoimmune disorders. In 2015,

spending on drugs for autoimmune disorders accounted for 20% of all specialty drug spending.<sup>10</sup>

- Dr. Yehuda Shoenfeld, an internationally-recognized researcher on autoimmunity and its relationship to vaccines, has published that “there are many reports that describe post-vaccination induced autoimmunity [and] strongly suggest that vaccines can induce autoimmunity”.<sup>11</sup>
- Are pharmaceutical companies like Boehringer Ingelheim profiting off vaccines directly and then indirectly with drugs for autoimmune diseases?
- BI is investing heavily in research into immunomodulating drugs and biologics to treat autoimmune and autoinflammatory diseases. They are collaborating with Yale.<sup>12</sup>
- Their new drug, Risankizumab, a joint effort with Abbvie (maker of blockbuster biologic Humira), will likely be the most expensive biologic on the market and is one of the “top 5 drugs to watch in 2019” for investors.<sup>13, 14</sup>
- Can Majority Leader Ritter remain objective with legislation that benefits vaccine manufacturers when Shipman and Goodwin and Brown Rudnick receive massive profits by representing Boehringer Ingelheim and other pharmaceutical companies?
- Is he a neutral party as he attempts to mandate vaccines on a small minority of Connecticut children with religious objections? Or do the above connections to vaccine manufacturers constitute a conflict of interest?

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3. <https://clinicaltrials.gov/ct2/show/NCT02203864?term=Boehringer+Ingelheim&cond=vaccine&rank=1>
4. <https://clinicaltrials.gov/ct2/show/NCT03164772?term=Boehringer+Ingelheim&cond=vaccine&rank=4>
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11. Soriano, Nesher, and Schoenfeld. "Predicting post-vaccination autoimmunity: Who might be at risk?". *Pharmacological Research*, 92:18-22. 2015.
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13. <https://www.pharmaceutical-technology.com/comment/abbvies-risankizumab-uptake-caveats-despite-anticipated-approvals/>
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