

Program on Regulations, Therapeutics, and Law (PORTAL)

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July 29, 2024 | 2024-R-0123

Issue

This report answers several questions about the Harvard Program on Regulations, Therapeutics, and Law (PORTAL). We contacted PORTAL for information on several of these questions, as noted below.

Who/what is the Harvard Program on Regulations, Therapeutics, and Law (PORTAL)?

PORTAL is a research core within the Division of Pharmacoepidemiology and Pharmacoeconomics at Harvard Medical School and Brigham & Women's Hospital. According to its [website](#), PORTAL:

bring[s] together concerned researchers, analysts, and trainees from the fields of medicine, law, epidemiology, and health policy to critically evaluate emerging issues on the regulation, use, and reimbursement of therapeutics (prescription drugs and medical devices). We are interested in how laws and regulations influence the development, utilization, and affordability of therapeutics, as well as the ethical questions that current and proposed policies raise for patients, physicians, policymakers, and payors. Particular areas of focus include drug and device regulation, intellectual property, cost-effectiveness, and comparative effectiveness.

Among other things, the website states that the goals of PORTAL's research "include its publication in major medical, legal, and health policy journals; dissemination through the lay media and

international, national, regional, and local professional meetings; and interaction with key decision-makers in the public and private sectors to ensure translation into actionable health care policy.”

Currently, PORTAL [includes](#) four core faculty members (all from Harvard Medical School) and a research team consisting of several research fellows, research assistants, and students in a range of disciplines. Their website also lists affiliated faculty and researchers from various other institutions.

Who and where does their funding come from? Is any of that funding from health insurers or pharmacy benefit managers?

According to its website, PORTAL’s funding sources include the following private entities:

- [Arnold Ventures](#): a philanthropy organization focused on evidence-based policy solutions
- [CeBIL – Centre for Advanced Studies in Biomedical Innovation Law, Novo Nordisk Foundation](#): a research initiative, based at the University of Copenhagen, focused on “legal challenges and rapid developments in the health and life science area,” funded in part by the [Novo Nordisk Foundation](#), an independent Danish enterprise foundation focused on medical research and affiliated with the pharmaceutical company, Novo Nordisk
- [The Commonwealth Fund](#): a private foundation that supports independent research on health care issues, with a focus on improved equity in health care access
- [Elevance Health](#): a health insurance company, formerly known as Anthem, Inc.
- [Gary and Mary West Foundation](#): a private foundation focused on addressing the needs of vulnerable seniors
- [The Greenwall Foundation](#): a private foundation with a mission “to expand bioethics knowledge to improve clinical, biomedical, and public health decision-making, policy, and practice”
- [National Academy for State Health Policy \(NASHP\)](#): a nonpartisan organization focusing on “developing and advancing state health policy innovations and solutions”
- [Kaiser Permanente Institute for Health Policy](#): an organization with a mission “to shape policy and practice with evidence and experience from the nation’s largest private integrated health care delivery and financing organization,” and affiliated with Kaiser Permanente, an insurer
- [RePo4EU](#) (an organization developing an online platform for precision drug repurposing)

The website also states that PORTAL receives funding from the [Massachusetts Health Policy Commission](#) and the U.S. Food and Drug Administration.

How many states does PORTAL work with?

According to PORTAL, “[w]e currently have a grant from NASHP to advise a cohort of seven states on implementing prescription drug affordability boards (PDABs) – Colorado, Maine, Maryland, Minnesota, New Hampshire, Oregon, and Washington. You can see some of the output [here](#). We have also been consultants for the Massachusetts Health Policy Commission.”

How many states does PORTAL have a contract with and what is the contract amount?

PORTAL reports that “[s]eparate from the NASHP grant (see above) we have contracts with Colorado, Oregon, and Washington to support the more technical operations of their PDABs.”

What is PORTAL’s relationship to NASHP, the Institute for Clinical and Economic Review (ICER), and the Arnold Foundation?

PORTAL reports that “[o]ur government and foundation funders include the FDA, NIA, Arnold Ventures, Commonwealth Fund, and the Greenwall Foundation, among others. We have no formal relationship with the Institute for Clinical and Economic Review (ICER).”

Does PORTAL have any patient representation or input?

PORTAL reports that “[w]e do not have patient representatives working within PORTAL, but we often connect with patient groups and understanding the patient impact of high drug costs is a key research area.”

Does PORTAL have any direct drug industry expertise or is it only academic?

PORTAL reports that it “is an academic group at Brigham and Women’s Hospital and Harvard Medical School, and no one in PORTAL accepts any personal financial support from pharmaceutical or medical device companies.”

Does PORTAL have any contracts with Connecticut’s Office of Health Strategy (OHS) or have they presented to OHS?

We contacted OHS for this information and their representative was unfamiliar with PORTAL. It appears that PORTAL has no affiliation with OHS.

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