Trump’s Pick to Lead the FDA Wants Faster Drug Approvals and Lower Costs

But do Scott Gottlieb’s interests lie with drugmakers or patients?

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President Trump picked Scott Gottlieb, MD, to run the Food and Drug Administration (FDA), reports Bloomberg. The Senate will have to confirm him.

Gottlieb is a more mainstream choice compared with other names floated earlier this year, and he is the preferred choice of the drug industry.

In past speeches, Gottlieb, who held senior positions in the FDA under George W. Bush, has expressed his desire to speed up the drug approval process and lower the costs of meds by easing up on regulations. He has also spoken about changing the rules regarding generic drugs as a way to make more of them available faster and cheaper.

“Throughout his career, including his time at the agency, Scott has shown that he has the skills necessary to continue to lead the FDA to be patient-centered and science-focused,” Ellen Sigal, founder and chair of Friends of Cancer Research, which focuses on speeding up the approval of promising drugs, told Bloomberg.

But the watchdog group Public Citizen called Gottlieb’s approach to the approval process “dangerous,” adding that from 2013 to 2015, he received about $413,000 in speaking fees from drug manufacturers. “Gottlieb’s appointment would accelerate a decades-long trend in which agency leadership too often makes decisions that are aligned more with the interests of industry than those of patients,” Public Citizen said in a statement, according to Bloomberg.

Gottlieb is a partner at one of the world’s largest venture capital firms, New Enterprise Associates, which has a portfolio of more than 300 businesses in the technology and health-care industries.

Currently, he is also a fellow at the conservative think tank American Enterprise Institute.

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