

## Medtronic spent \$1.3M on lobbying in 3Q

The Associated Press

Medtronic Inc., the world's largest medical device maker, spent \$1.29 million in the third quarter to lobby Congress on issues affecting its implants, according to a government disclosure form.

The company's lobbying budget was up slightly from the \$1.18 million spent in the second quarter and \$1.03 million spent in the same period last year.

Medtronic lobbied on bills designed to repeal a 2.3 percent tax on certain medical devices that goes into effect in 2013. The tax was part of the Obama administration's health reform law of 2010 and is intended to raise more than \$20 billion in revenue over the next decade to expand health coverage to uninsured Americans.

Industry executives have complained that the fees will raise their costs and force them to lay off workers, though the Obama administration argues device companies will benefit in the long run as more patients become eligible to receive their products.

The company also lobbied on bills that would reform the Food and Drug Administration's system for approving certain medical devices. For more than 30 years the FDA has granted speedy approval to devices that are similar to products already on the market. This so-called 510(k) process is cheaper and faster than the review process for first-of-a-kind devices, which must go through rigorous medical testing.

The FDA is now reworking the system amid criticism that it has been overused, allowing high-risk devices onto the market without proper review. Medtronic executives and other medical device professionals say the FDA has already become too conservative in its approach, making it harder to get new devices to the market in a cost-efficient manner.

In July a panel of medical experts from the Institute of Medicine recommended phasing out the 510(k) system completely and designing a new system. The FDA said it disagreed with the report's conclusions.

The company's lobbyists also advocated Medtronic's position on physician-owned medical device distribution companies, several free trade agreements and corporate tax issues, according to a form filed Oct. 20 with the House clerk's office.

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