

Biosimilar market creates rift in drug industry known for its solidarity

The pharmaceutical industry's massive lobbying operation has a well-earned reputation for maintaining a united front on most of the major policy proposals that could affect drug makers and their bottom lines. But as the industry eyes the burgeoning biosimilar market, that united front is starting to crack.

For years, branded pharmaceutical and biotech manufacturers — largely represented by PhRMA and BIO — have clashed most often with generic manufacturers, largely represented by their own Association for Accessible Medicines.

Now, however, branded drug makers' interest in biosimilar drugs — highly similar versions of biologic drugs made with living cells — are blurring the traditional lines of who competes with whom, and increasingly pitting one against another...

The new competitive landscape is changing each company's strategy. Some manufacturers are still earning billions from the biosimilars they have on the market. They tend to advocate for policies that will make it harder for biosimilars to come to market...Others have much more aggressively pursued biosimilars — and their lobbying teams in Washington have taken positions to reflect that business stance.

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The debate around biosimilars — and the split in the advocacy community — could have serious repercussions for Washington's efforts to lower prescription drug prices... Biosimilars could reduce spending on biologic drugs by as much as \$54 billion by 2026, according to a 2017 RAND study sponsored by a biosimilar manufacturer.

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