Independence from Commercial Interests

ACCME’s Standards for Commercial SupportSM: Standards to Ensure the Independence of CME Activities

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Accredited CME

- Is about your professional practice
- Is content valid
- Is independent of the control of ACCME-defined commercial interests

"To meet the needs of the 21st century physician, CME will provide support for the physicians' professional development that is based on continuous improvement in the knowledge, strategies and performance-in-practice necessary to provide optimal patient care."

Final Report from the ACCME Task Force on Competency and the Continuum April 2004
Continuing professional education is effective in assisting professionals to modify and improve their practice.
Conflict of Interest Occurs in Accredited CME when...

A person has a financial relationship with an ACCME-defined commercial interest and has an opportunity to control the content of CME relevant to that relationship...and has an opportunity to control the content of CME relevant to that relationship.
A **commercial interest** is any entity producing, marketing, re-selling, or distributing health care goods or services consumed by, or used on, patients.

The ACCME does not consider providers of clinical service directly to patients to be commercial interests.

A commercial interest is not eligible for ACCME accreditation. Commercial interests cannot be accredited providers and cannot be joint sponsors. Within the context of this definition and limitation, the ACCME considers the following types of organizations to be eligible for accreditation and free to control the content of CME:

- 501-C Non-profit organizations (Note, ACCME screens 501c organizations for eligibility. Those that advocate for commercial interests as a 501c organization are not eligible for accreditation in the ACCME system. They cannot serve in the role of joint sponsor, but they can be a commercial supporter.)
- Government organizations
- Non-health care related companies
- Liability insurance providers
- Health insurance providers
- Group medical practices
- For-profit hospitals
- For-profit rehabilitation centers
- For-profit nursing homes
- Blood banks
- Diagnostic laboratories
The thought is that...

There is an incentive to maintain, or increase, the value of that relationship.
The undesirable outcome ...

...would be for learners to go off and do more then is necessary and/or is appropriate
“...when the favorable message is delivered in the context of education—even if corporate sponsorship is disclosed—there is an imprimatur of credibility and independence.”

“There is a risk that physicians will allow favorable drug messages learned in an educational context to change their clinical practices to favor use of those drugs, without critically appraising the evidence or fully assessing information from other sources.”
The Undesirable Outcome

“Through their implicit or explicit, control of, or influence on, CME content, commercial interests could create commercial bias in CME (favoritism) that could result in a learner’s inclination towards, or actual, use of a product or service that is more than is necessary.”
Law of Ever Expanding Control

“The quantity and detail of reporting required by monitoring bureaus tends to rise steadily over time, regardless of the amount or nature of the activity being monitored.”

Anthony Downs. Inside Bureaucracy, Rand Corp, 1967
The approach taken by the ACCME

2° Prevention
Truthful, Evidence, By the Profession

3° Prevention
Resolve and Reveal Relationships with Industry

1° Prevention
Professional need, **not** funding drives content
2° Prevention
Truthful, Evidence, By the Profession

3° Prevention
Resolve and Reveal Relationships with Industry

1° Prevention
Professional need, not funding drives content
“We applaud the Accreditation Council for Continuing Medical Education’s efforts to provide additional guidance for ensuring research independence and a free flow of scientific exchange, while safeguarding accredited CME from commercial influence.

Your vigilance in this important matter contributes to the best practices of unbiased information-sharing and will benefit, ultimately, the health of the American public.”

Raynard S. Kington, M.D., Ph.D.
Deputy Director,
National Institutes of Health
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Thank You