

CONFLICT OF INTEREST/ VENDOR INTERACTIONS

([See Appendix A for Policy](#))

Purpose of Policy

The purpose of this policy is to establish policy for interactions with pharmaceutical, nutraceutical, Biotech, Device, Hospital, Research Equipment, and Supplies Industries (Biomedical) industry representatives for residents/fellows of the University of Connecticut School of Medicine (UConn SOM). Interactions with Industry representatives occur in a variety of contexts, including marketing of new products, educational support of residents/fellows, and continuing medical education (CME). Residents/fellows also participate in interactions with Industry representatives off campus and in scholarly publications. Many aspects of these interactions are positive and important for promoting the educational, clinical and research missions of UConn SOM. However, these interactions must be ethical and cannot create conflicts or perceived conflicts of interest that could endanger patient safety, data integrity, the integrity of the education or the reputation of UConn SOM and the affiliated sites.

Residents/fellows must be aware of the National Physician Payment Transparency Program (Open Payments). This program aims to increase public awareness of financial relationships between industry and health care providers. The intent of Open Payments is to create a national resource for beneficiaries, consumers and providers to know more about the relationships among physicians, teaching hospitals and industry by requiring industry to report to CMS any payments or other transfers of value they make to physicians and teaching hospitals. Medical residents/fellows are currently excluded from the definition of physicians for the purposes of the Open Payments program. Further details can be found at the Center for Medicare and Medicaid services (<http://go.cms.gov/openpayments>).

Statement of Policy

It is the policy of UConn SOM Graduate Medical Education (GME) Program that interactions with the Industry should be conducted so as to avoid or minimize conflicts of interest. When conflicts of interest do arise, they must be addressed appropriately, as described below.

Scope of Policy

This policy covers interactions between residents/fellows and Industry during working hours. The policy incorporates the following types of interactions:

- I. Gifts and compensation
- II. Site access by sales and marketing representatives
- III. Provision of scholarships and other educational funds to residents/fellows
- IV. Support for educational and other professional activities
- V. Acceptance of free medication, supplements, device, and other product samples
- VI. Disclosure of relationships with Industry
- VII. Training of residents/fellows regarding potential conflict of interest in interactions with Industry
- VIII. References

I. **Gifts and Compensation**

- A. Personal gifts from Industry may **not** be accepted by residents/fellows at any clinical facility in which GME occurs. This includes UConn SOM affiliated sites.
 - 1. No form of personal gift from Industry can be accepted by residents/fellows
 - 2. Unrestricted educational grants may be provided by industry to the Program Director or designee on behalf of the program but not directly to residents/fellows or teaching faculty. Unrestricted educational grants are funds given to a program for future educational activities (i.e., to bring a speaker or visiting professor for teaching rounds or conferences; purchase of teaching materials or books; or pay for an off-site educational meeting). The program maintains full control of how the funds are used. Credit can be given to the funding Industry/ies that have donated the unrestricted educational grant.
 - 3. Educational materials such as textbooks may be provided by Industry to the Program Director or designee on behalf of the program at the Program Director's discretion. Identifying labels such as pharmaceutical inserts or logos must be removed or covered prior to their use with residents/fellows.
 - 4. Medical staff at non-UConn-operated clinical facilities may accept gifts but may not provide these to residents/fellows without prior review by the Program Director or designee.
- B. Residents/fellows may not accept gifts or compensation for listening to a sales talk by an Industry representative.
- C. Residents/fellows may not accept gifts or compensation for prescribing or changing a patient's prescription, food supplement, or device.
- D. Residents/fellows must consciously and actively divorce clinical care decisions from any perceived or actual benefits expected from any company.
- E. Residents/fellows may not accept direct compensation, including the defraying of costs, for attending a Continuing Medical Education (CME) or other activity or conference, unless the resident/fellow is speaking or otherwise actively participating at the event.

II. **Graduate Medical Education Site Access by Sales and Marketing Representatives**

- A. Sales and marketing representatives are not permitted in any direct patient care areas in which GME occurs and where protected health information is accessible, with one exception: when providing necessary training on a previously purchased device or a device considered for purchase, and in the presence of teaching faculty. This training must adhere to HIPAA privacy rules.
- B. Sales and marketing representatives are permitted in *non-patient care* areas of graduate medical education, by appointment only, with faculty or with faculty and residents/fellows, in the setting of faculty supervision of trainee-industry interactions.

III. **Provision of Scholarships and Other Educational Funds to Residents/Fellows**

- A. Industry support of residents/fellows must be free of any actual or perceived conflict of interest, must be specifically for the purpose of education, and must comply with all of the following:
 - 1. UConn SOM Program Director or designee selects the resident/fellow.
 - 2. The funds are provided to the program and not directly to the resident/fellow.
 - 3. The Program Director or designee has determined that the funded conference or program has educational merit.
 - 4. The resident/fellow is not subject to any implicit or explicit expectation of providing something in return for the support, i.e., a "quid pro quo."

- B. This provision may not apply to national or regional merit-based awards, which will be reviewed by the Program Director on a case-by-case basis.

IV. **Support for Educational and Other Professional Activities**

- A. Programs must be aware of the Accreditation Council for Continuing Medical Education (ACCME) Standards for Commercial Support. They provide useful guidelines for evaluating all forms of Industry interaction, both on and off campus and including UConn-sponsored and other events. The Standards may be found at www.accme.org.
- B. All education events sponsored by UConn SOM programs must be compliant with ACCME Standards for Commercial Support whether or not CME credit is awarded.
 - 1. Educational grants that are compliant with the ACCME Standards may be received from Industry by the program. ACCME guidelines include:
 - a. Financial support by Industry is fully disclosed by the meeting sponsor.
 - b. The meeting or lecture content is determined by the speaker and not the Industrial sponsor.
 - c. The lecturer is expected to provide a fair and balanced assessment of therapeutic options and to promote objective scientific and educational activities and discourse.
 - d. UConn SOM resident/fellow or teaching faculty participant is not required by an Industry sponsor to accept advice or services concerning speakers, content, etc., as a condition of the sponsor's contribution of funds or services.
- C. Meals or other types of food directly funded by Industry may **not** be provided for Residents/fellows. Unrestricted educational funds may be provided to a Program Director or designee on behalf of the program and expended for refreshments at resident/fellow educational sessions. The contributing Industry/ies can be credited for contributing an unrestricted educational grant for the session.
- D. This provision does not apply to meetings of professional societies that may receive partial Industry support or professional meetings governed by ACCME Standards.

V. **Acceptance of Free Samples**

- A. Teaching faculty may accept free drug, nutraceutical, or device samples from industry for distribution to patients by residents/fellows. This acceptance must occur in administrative (non-patient care) areas.
- B. Since distribution of sample products to patients may encourage use of costlier products, residents/fellows and teaching faculty should be cautious in distributing such products.
- C. Free samples may never be sold.
- D. Free samples should not be used by residents/fellows or teaching faculty for themselves or family.

VI. **Disclosure of Relationships with Industry**

- A. Residents/fellows are prohibited from publishing articles under their own names that are written in whole or material part by Industry employees.
- B. In scholarly publications, residents/fellows must disclose their related financial interests in accordance with the International Committee of Medical Journal Editors (<http://www.icmje.org>).

VII. **References**

AMA Statement on Gifts to Physicians from Industry (<http://www.ama-assn.org/ama/pub/category/4001.html>).

The Accrediting Council for Continuing Medical Education Standards for Commercial Support (www.accme.org).

Reviewed 3/14, 5/17, 4/19