

Policy Title: STANDARDS FOR COMMERCIAL SUPPORT
Approved: CME Committee 7/3/07, Board 8/14/07
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INTRODUCTION

To ensure compliance with the Accreditation Council for Continuing Medical Education (ACCME) Standards for Commercial Support, the Benton Franklin County Medical Society (BFCMS) has developed the Standards for Commercial Support Policy.

The purpose of this policy is to ensure that planning of all Category I CME activities is free from commercial interest and to address any conflicts of interest that may arise.

The ACCME defines commercial support as “financial, or in-kind, contributions given by a commercial interest, which is used to pay all or part of the costs of a CME activity.”

The ACCME defines commercial interest as “any entity producing, marketing, re-selling, or distributing health care goods or services, consumed by, or used on, patients.”

The full ACCME Standards for Commercial Support may be found [HERE](#).

GUIDELINES/POLICY

Independence

BFCMS will ensure that all decisions pertaining to the planning of a CME activity will be free of commercial interest. These areas include, but are not limited to:

- Identification of CME needs
- Determination of educational objectives
- Selection and presentation of content
- Selection of all persons and organizations that will be in a position to control the content of the CME
- Selection of educational methods

- Evaluation of the activity

A commercial interest cannot take the role of non-accredited partner in a joint provider relationship.

Resolution of Personal Conflicts of Interest

BFCMS requires that all people in a position to control the content of a CME activity will disclose all relevant financial relationships with any commercial interest to BFCMS. This includes the CME Committee Members, Board of Directors members, staff and faculty. ACCME defines relevant financial relationships as “financial relationships in any amount occurring within the past 12 months that create a conflict of interest.”

- **For directly provided activities:** CME committee members, board members and staff will be asked to complete the “Disclosure of Financial Relationships” form annually. If a conflict of interest is found to exist, the “Resolution of Conflict of Interest Form” will be completed prior to the start of the activity. Faculty members will be required to complete a “Faculty Disclosure of Commercial Support” form. If a conflict exists, the CME Committee will complete the “Resolution of Conflict of Interest Form” prior to the start of the activity.
- **In jointly provided activities:** The planning committee members will be required to complete disclosures and coordinate the completion of the disclosures of their faculty. If conflicts are found to exist, they will complete the “Resolution of Conflict of Interest Form” prior to the start of the activity.

Any person who refuses to complete a disclosure form will be disqualified from their role in the CME activity.

Appropriate Use of Commercial Support

BFCMS will be responsible for and have control over all decisions concerning the disposition and disbursement of commercial support. BFCMS will not accept advice or services from a commercial interest as conditions of accepting funds or services and furthermore, all commercial support associated with a CME activity will be given with the full knowledge and approval of BFCMS.

The terms, conditions and purposes of the commercial support will be documented in a written agreement between BFCMS (and educational partner in the case of joint providership) and the commercial supporter. The agreement must include BFCMS, even if the support is being given directly to the educational partner or joint provider. This agreement will specify the commercial interest that is the source of the support. Both the commercial supporter and the provider must sign the agreement. BFCMS may use the commercial supporter’s written agreement of support if it meets all of the ACCME requirements.

BFCMS will maintain a **Faculty Honoraria and Expense Policy** that will outline the reimbursement of honoraria and expenses for faculty members and planners of CME activities. Expenses in compliance with the Faculty Honoraria and Expense Policy must be paid directly by BFCMS, the joint provider or designated educational partner. No other payment shall be given to the director of the activity, planning committee members, teachers or authors, joint provider or any others involved with the supported activity.

If teachers or authors are listed on the agenda as facilitating or conducting a presentation or session, but participate in the remainder of an educational event as a learner, their expenses can be reimbursed and honoraria can be paid for their teacher or author role only.

Social functions or meals at CME activities will never compete with or take precedence over the CME activity.

Commercial support will not be used for travel, lodging, honoraria, or personal expenses for non-faculty participants of a CME activity. BFCMS may use commercial support to pay for travel, lodging, honoraria or personal expenses for bona fide employees and volunteers of BFCMS, joint providers or educational partners.

BFCMS will maintain accurate financial documentation detailing the receipt and expenditure of any commercial support received.

Appropriate Management of Associated Commercial Promotion

Advertisements and commercial exhibits will not interfere with the planning or presentation of any CME activity. Additionally, they will not be the condition of the provision of commercial support of CME activities.

Product-promotion materials or product-specific advertisement of any type will be prohibited in/during CME activities. The juxtaposition of editorial and advertising material on the same products or subjects must be avoided.

Live (staffed exhibits, presentations) or enduring (printed or electronic advertisements) promotional materials will be kept separate from any CME activities and will not be displayed or distributed in the educational space before, during or after a CME activity.

For print, advertisements and promotional materials will not be interleaved within the pages of the CME content. Advertisements and promotional materials may face the first or last pages of printed CME content as long as these materials are not related to the CME content they face and are not paid for by the commercial supporters of the CME activity.

For computer based, advertisements and promotional materials will not be visible on the screen at the same time as the CME content and not interleaved between computer “windows” or screens of the CME content.

For audio and video recording, advertisements and promotional materials will not be included within the CME. There will also be no “commercial breaks.”

For live, face-to-face CME, advertisements and promotional materials cannot be displayed or distributed in the educational space immediately before, during or after a CME activity. Representatives of a commercial interest will not be allowed to engage in sales or promotional activities while in the space or place of the CME activity. CME activities will not be placed on a web site owned or controlled by a commercial interest. With clear notification that the learner is leaving the educational Web site, links from the Web site of an ACCME accredited provider to pharmaceutical and device manufacturers’ product Web sites are permitted before or after the educational content of a CME activity, but shall not be embedded in the educational content of a CME activity. Advertising of any type is prohibited within the educational content of CME activities on the Internet including, but not limited to, banner ads, subliminal ads, and pop-up window ads.

Educational materials that are part of a CME activity will not contain any advertising, trade name or a product-group message. Printed material distributed about the non-CME elements of a CME activity that are not directly related to the transfer of education to the learner (schedules, content descriptions, etc.) may contain product promotion material or product-specific advertisement.

BFCMS will not use a commercial interest as the agent providing a CME activity to learners e.g., distribution of self-study CME activities or arranging for electronic access to CME activities.

For Journal-based CME, None of the elements of journal-based CME can contain any advertising or product group messages of commercial interests. The learner must not encounter advertising within the pages of the article or within the pages of the related questions or evaluation materials.

Educational materials that are part of a CME activity, such as slides, abstracts and handouts, cannot contain any advertising, corporate logo, trade name or a product-group message of an ACCME-defined commercial interest.

Print or electronic information distributed about the non-CME elements of a CME activity that are not directly related to the transfer of education to the learner, such as schedules and content descriptions, may include product-promotion material or product-specific advertisement.

A provider cannot use a commercial interest as the agent providing a CME activity to learners, e.g., distribution of self-study CME activities or arranging for electronic access to CME activities.

Content and Format without Commercial Bias

The content or format of a CME activity and its related materials must promote improvements and quality in healthcare and not a specific proprietary business interest or a commercial interest. Presentations must give a balanced view of therapeutic options. Use of generic drug names will be encouraged to help contribute to impartiality in activities. If the CME educational material or content includes trade names, where available, trade names from several companies should be used, not just trade names from a single company.

Disclosures Relevant to Potential Commercial Bias

An individual must disclose to learners any relevant financial relationships including the following information:

- Name of the individual
- Name of the commercial interests
- Nature of the relationship the person has with the commercial interest

Individuals with no relevant financial relationship must inform the learners that no relevant financial relationship exists.

'Disclosure' must never include the use of a corporate logo, trade name or a product-group message of an ACCME-defined commercial interest

The source of all commercial support will be disclosed to learners. If support is "in-kind" the nature of the support must be disclosed to learners. "Disclosure" will never include use of a trade name or product-group message. BFCMS will disclose the above information to learners prior to the beginning of the CME activity.