

A Mechanism to Identify and Resolve Speaker/Planner CONFLICTS OF INTEREST

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As a continuation of the October 2004 article “*Updated Standards for Commercial Support*”, accredited providers must implement a mechanism to identify and resolve all conflicts of interest prior to the educational activity being delivered (SCS 2.3). **How can you accomplish this requirement?** First, the Accreditation Council for Continuing Medical Education (ACCME) has provided a detailed educational resource under *News Releases* at <http://www.accme.org> to help you to form your own mechanism/policy to address this requirement. Second, I have developed a checklist that follows the ACCME guideline as a policy for Marshall (*Shirleen has provided you a copy with the letter dated July 5, 2005 from Dr. Helsley, WVSMA CME Chair*).

This checklist provides specific steps.

Step 1- Planning: Identifying all in a position to control content and required to disclose relevant financial relationships. (Reference SCS 2.1)

Step 2 – Identifying individuals who Refuse to Disclose. (Reference SCS 2.2)

Step 3 – Resolution of identified Conflicts of Interest for Planners and Speakers. (Reference SCS 2.3)

Step 4 – Speaker Disclosure to Learners (all planners and speakers)– Disclosure of relevant (or no) financial relationships (*past 12 months*) of those with control of content must be made to learners prior to the beginning of an activity. (Reference SCS 6.1, 6.21)

Disclosure to learners should include (Reference ACCME Policy 2000-B-14)

Faculty member’s name.

Name of the commercial supporter or entity with which the faculty member has the relationship or affiliation.

Type(s) of relationships (*formal advisory activities, specific scientific research, full time/part-time employment, development of educational materials, speakers’ bureau, product royalty/licensing fees, relevant stock holdings, etc.*)

Disclosure Forms may include:

Products discussed – unlabeled use and investigational products (although not required by the Updated Standards, some providers still make this as part of their disclosure requirements)

Affiliations with commercial companies – A relevant (any amount) an individual has had in the past 12 months. Months or years affiliated, percentage of income, annual remuneration, relevant holdings-i.e. dollar amount of stock shares owned by an individual or his/her family member.

Step 5 – Speaker Honoraria and Expense Reimbursement (Reference SCS 3.8). Ask yourself – Does your organization have a policy for speaker honoraria and expense reimbursement? This is a requirement of the Updated Standards.

Step 6 – Letter of Agreement documenting terms of commercial support (Reference SCS 3.4-3.6) (when applicable). A completed letter of agreement identifies terms of the commercial support with appropriate signature acknowledgments of the commercial representative, activity chairperson, CME representative. Accredited providers may utilize a commercial company letter of agreement if it addresses and contains the same information accepted as policy by the same.

Step 7 – Disclosure of source of commercial support to learners prior to the activity. (Reference SCS 6.3) (when applicable). Accomplish this by verbal acknowledgment, present on the evaluation form, or via syllabus insert, poster, brochures, electronic means, website, etc.

As the CME environment moves to more and more accountability of all individuals involved in program planning, development and conduction, identifying and resolving conflicts of interests before the activity allows the learner to receive the best possible return on their investment, that is “their time”, as participants in a *Certified, Meaningful, Experience called CME*.