

## Position Statement on Physician/Industry Interaction

**(Approved by the Board of Directors: November 9, 2013; November 6, 2021, November 29, 2021)**

All aspects of the practice of medicine require adherence to the highest professional standards, ethical behaviors, and transparency. The American Academy of Dermatology is committed to adoption and enforcement of policies which are in full compliance with the Accreditation Council for Continuing Medical Education (ACCME) Standards on Commercial Support and Accreditation Criteria and Policies, Accreditation Council for Graduate Medical Education (ACGME) Policies, and the Council on Medical Specialty Societies (CMSS) Codes on Interactions with Companies.

In developing their guidelines, the ACGME notes that studies confirm that conflicts of interest in medical education, research, and physician practice can result from industry promotional marketing and research funding. Recognizing the ACGME guidelines, the Academy policies align with the ACCME Standards and CMSS Code to help counteract undue influence and ensure the highest level of professionalism, ethics and transparency, by minimizing actual and perceived conflicts of interest.

The Academy also recognizes there should be substantive, appropriate, and well-managed interactions between industry, physicians, and physicians-in-training. The Academy believes these interactions must be vital to advancing patient care and research and must be conducted in a way that is principled and upholds public trust.

CMSS observes, "For-profit entities that develop, produce, market or distribute drugs, devices, services or therapies used to diagnose, treat, monitor, manage, and alleviate health conditions, referred to in this Code as "Companies," also strive to help patients live longer and healthier lives. Companies invest resources to bring new drugs, devices and therapies out of the laboratory and to the patient while maximizing value for shareholders." A Company is a for-profit entity that develops, produces, markets, or distributes drugs, devices, services or therapies used to diagnose, treat, monitor, manage, and alleviate health conditions. (Examples include but are not limited to Pharmaceutical, Device, Electronic Health Records, telemedicine platforms and data organizations.)

Physicians and industry share the goal of improving health and overall care of patients. Industry should invest its resources into researching, developing, and delivering new drugs and therapies to the market in support of the development of therapies for patients, while meeting the expectations of their stakeholders. Physicians' primary priority is the care and well-being of their patients. The explicit and implicit code of ethics that forms the patient-physician relationship is the foundation of the medical profession. The Academy has long held that the best interest of the patient is, always has been and always must be, paramount.

The Academy also understands that while the application and enforcement of the above referenced guidelines are in keeping with supporting core competence and professionalism, we must also recognize that appropriate interactions with industry would help to ensure that physicians and residents avail themselves of the latest scientific developments and innovations impacting patient care. The Association of American Medical Colleges (AAMC) has noted that, "Industry has an important role to play in educating and informing health care professionals about the availability, value and proper use of novel medications and

vaccines, new uses of existing products, and the new science that significantly bears on the therapeutic or economic value of products.”

The Academy encourages organizations and academic institutions to take a thoughtful stance in ensuring that early career physicians are taught how to manage appropriate and professional interactions with industry, while gaining knowledge that will help them upon entering their practice. Professional interactions may provide additional technical, scientific, and practical clinical information with the potential to enhance patient care.

The Academy supports proper and professional interaction between physicians and industry. In particular, these interactions during residency and fellowship can serve to augment education and allow for the development of critical evaluative skills while encouraging the highest standards of professional behavior.

The Academy recommends that interactions between residents or members in fellowships and industry be proctored. The Academy also recommends that interactions between any Academy members and industry be in full compliance with the standards and guidelines of ACGME, ACCME and CMSS. These interactions can expose early career physicians to the latest scientific developments and innovations impacting patient care. Faculty who proctor these exchanges can provide additional educational guidance on ethical and professional interactions, from how to frame thoughtful questions to how to foster physician/industry interactions that are transparent and uphold the highest standards of professionalism.

The Academy believes that by instilling the values of what are appropriate, professional, ethical and transparent interactions between early career physicians and industry during the formative years of their medical education, early career physicians will be better equipped to interpret and adhere to the guidelines and standards in their future interactions with industry while preparing them to provide the highest quality of medical care to their patients.

### **Resources on Interaction with Industry**

1. Council of Medical Specialty Societies (CMSS): Code for Interactions with Companies, <http://www.cmss.org>.
2. Accreditation Council for Graduate Medical Education (ACGME): Principles to Guide the Relationship between Graduate Medical Education, Industry, and Other Funding Sources for Programs and Sponsoring Institutions Accredited by the ACGME, <http://www.acgme.org>.
3. Accreditation Council for Continuing Medical Education (ACCME): Standards for Commercial Support: Standards to Ensure Independence in CME Activities, <http://www.accme.org>.
4. Association of American Medical Colleges (AAMC): Industry Funding of Medical Education: Report of an AAMC Task Force, <https://members.aamc.org>.

*This Position Statement is provided for educational and informational purposes only. It is intended to offer physicians guiding principles and policies regarding the practice of dermatology. This Position Statement is not intended to establish a legal or medical standard of care. Physicians should use their personal and professional judgment in interpreting these guidelines and applying them to the particular circumstances of their individual practice arrangements.*