



Coalition for Healthcare Communication's Response to ACCME's Promotional Teacher and Author-Free Accredited CME Call for Comments

Background: The ACCME will also consider creating a new designation and review process for providers that wish to identify their program of CME as one that does not utilize teachers/authors that have acted for a commercial interest in promotional and marketing activities, i.e., Promotional Teacher and Author-FreeTM.

PROPOSED POLICY

The ACCME proposes that these programs would not allow persons with ACCME-defined relevant financial relationships derived from marketing and promotional activities to teach in or write for any part of a CME program that carries this designation. In essence, compliance with Standard 2, Resolution of Personal Conflicts of Interest, of the ACCME Standards for Commercial SupportSM would be fulfilled by recusal.

The Coalition's September 12, 2008 response to ACCME's Call for Comments on a similar proposed policy "*Should professional writers and faculty that have been employed by commercial interests be systematically excluded from related certified CME activities?*" applies to this proposed policy. First and foremost, the Coalition strongly supports strict adherence to the existing ACCME Standards for Commercial Support as the best and most appropriate means to manage conflicts of interest. However, the Coalition does not support the proposed policy that would in effect prohibit persons with ACCME-defined relevant financial relationships derived from marketing and promotional activities to teach in or write for any part of a CME program that carries the proposed designation. The ACCME requires that accredited providers establish mechanisms to identify and resolve conflicts of interest. Creating the proposed separate designation suggests accredited providers are not compliant with Standard 2: Resolution of Personal Conflicts of Interest of The Standards for Commercial Support. In essence this separate designation suggests that teachers and authors who have acted for a commercial interest in promotional and marketing activities are unable to educate physicians on a CME topic without instilling commercial bias.

This proposed change creates an inherent conflict preempting its established mechanisms to identify and resolve conflicts of interest. In addition, if adopted, this policy would have the practical effect of eliminating a large number of eminent educators from participating in accredited CME activities. The result would be a significantly diminished capacity to develop state-of-the-art CME activities designed to disseminate the latest medical discoveries. The outcome would be to greatly hinder the ability to improve patient care.