

## NEWS

### From the Desk of the ACCP President

June 01, 2020

*Brian L. Erstad, Pharm.D., FCCP, BCPS*



### Commercial Support of Health Care Organizations

Over the past couple of decades, there has been increasing scrutiny of the pharmaceutical industry's influence on medication prescribing, extending from direct-to-consumer advertising to various forms of marketing to health professionals. Concerns about these promotional practices have resulted in limitations on pharmaceutical marketing to health professionals, particularly in health systems, through policies aimed at limiting or prohibiting industry representatives' product detailing activities, provision of gifts or meals, and distribution of drug samples and other promotional inducements to prescribe specific medications. Almost all health professional societies have adopted policies requiring disclosure of potential conflicts of interest by their leadership and the speakers at their meetings. However, there has been much less focus on the potential influence of the pharmaceutical industry on professional societies at the broader organizational level. Most health professional societies today receive some form of financial support from pharmaceutical industry through exhibit hall fees, sponsorship of social functions, advertising, and other promotional means. I am not aware of recent data, but at the beginning of this century, more than 50% of continuing medical education (CME) activities were estimated to be funded by industry.<sup>1</sup>

On January 1, 2013, ACCP officially released a set of new policies in "Organizational Guidance: Accepting Commercial Support." This document took more than a year to develop and included recommendations from the ACCP membership and a three-member task group representing the ACCP Board of Regents, the ACCP Research Institute (now the ACCP Foundation) Board of Trustees, and the Pharmacotherapy Publications, Inc. Board of Directors. The document established guiding principles and policies related to interactions with commercial entities. In particular, it stated that to maintain professional boundaries and avoid conflicts of interest, ACCP would no longer solicit or accept direct or indirect commercial support for exhibits/advertising, continuing pharmacy education, or social functions at its national meetings.

I believe it's timely to bring this policy document to the attention of ACCP members who may be unaware of its existence and to make clear how uncommon it is for professional health care associations and organizations to have a comprehensive policy that prohibits commercial support for the full range of general association and meeting-related educational and social activities. This is something the ACCP membership should be proud of – I know I am.

#### Reference:

1. Dalsing MC. Industry working with physicians through professional medical associations. *J Vasc Surg* 2011;54(3 suppl):41S-6S.