

APhA Policy for Accepting External Support

Adopted by the APhA Board of Trustees, June 28, 2010

PREAMBLE

The American Pharmacists Association (APhA) was founded in 1852 as the American Pharmaceutical Association and has been continuously prominent in health care currents as the first-established national professional society of pharmacists. APhA is the largest association of pharmacists in the United States, priding among its membership more than 62,000 practicing pharmacists, pharmaceutical scientists, student pharmacists, pharmacy technicians, and others interested in advancing the profession. The Association is a non-profit organization whose mission is to provide information, education, and advocacy to empower its members to improve medication use and advance patient care. APhA recognizes the important role it plays as the national professional association representing pharmacists in all practice settings and understands that its activities reflect on all pharmacists. The Association fulfills its mission to members by being the leader in:

- Providing timely and accurate information that is vital to our members.
- Raising societal awareness about the role of pharmacists as essential in patient care for optimal medication use.
- Providing state-of-the-art resources to enhance our members' continuing professional development.
- Educating and influencing legislators, policy makers, regulators, and the public to advance our vision and mission.
- Creating unique opportunities for our members to connect and share experiences with their peers across practice settings.

In recognition of its breadth of representation and the inherent accompanying responsibility to be unbiased in its statements and actions, APhA is vigilant in ensuring that its activities and relationships with business entities adhere to explicit ethical standards that are derived from the Association's mission. The intention of adhering to these standards is to preclude any real or perceived chance of influencing patient care decisions for any reason other than the best interests of the patient. External support¹ from pharmaceutical companies and other for-profit corporations contributes to APhA meeting its mission.²

¹ "External support," for purposes of this document, encompasses the full range of relationships between APhA and for-profit corporations, including the purchase of services (such as advertising and exhibit space), grants for educational activities, and support of non-educational activities.

² This document reflects the perspective of APhA as a non-profit professional association; other considerations apply to the APhA Foundation, which is a separate charitable, philanthropic organization.

Financial relationships with any external sources of support may create a potential for real or apparent conflict of interest for APhA. Occasions for conflicts of interest are common. Although some conflicts of interest are unethical, others are not because they can be appropriately managed. The appearance of a conflict of interest may negatively impact APhA's reputation, regardless of whether the conflict actually results in inappropriate action. As a responsible and essential endeavor, APhA is taking steps to establish policies and procedures that address these issues without negatively impacting the Association's ability to meet its goals and objectives.

Over the last decade, an increasing number of calls for greater disclosure, transparency, and accountability with regard to sources and uses of external support have come to the fore. This interest has included discussions by governmental entities, press reports about the influence of commercial companies on health care, and reports and recommendations from a variety of governmental, non-profit, and professional organizations. In response to this environment, medical specialty societies and other professional associations of health care providers have been adopting and disseminating policies and procedures on external support; the efforts of these entities seek to clarify and publicly disclose their positions on the use of external support. Furthermore, these policies serve as guiding principles for leadership and staff involved in activities that receive external support. APhA is adopting similar policies for precisely the same reasons.

The ensuing principles represent APhA's roadmap for accepting external support and managing the inherent conflicts associated with this support.

GUIDING PRINCIPLES FOR ACCEPTING EXTERNAL SUPPORT

The following principles will guide all financial (and gift-in-kind) interactions between APhA and commercial, non-profit, and charitable organizations. These principles are designed to mitigate any real or perceived conflicts of interest with external supporters. It is APhA's policy that:

1. Alignment with APhA's mission and values will be the basis for decisions regarding any relationship with external supporters.
2. APhA will engage with all parties (external supporters, individual members, and others) in a consistent manner that employs the same level of professionalism and integrity.
3. APhA follows standard business practices in facilitating external supporter access to its members through advertising in its publications and exhibiting at its conferences.
4. APhA evaluates each prospective external supporter according to mission alignment, organizational policy, the Code of Ethics for Pharmacists, funding interest, and related criteria before accepting that support. APhA reserves the right to decline external funding from any source.
5. APhA must maintain objectivity with respect to pharmacy or patient health issues regardless of external support relationships.
6. APhA adheres to the current accreditation standards of the Accreditation Council for Pharmacy Education (ACPE) and the Accreditation Council for Continuing Medical Education (ACCME) Standards for Commercial Support in all matters related to external support for continuing pharmacy education (CPE) activities.
7. APhA does not endorse commercial, non-profit, or charitable organizations; nor does APhA endorse specific products or services.³ While APhA will consistently disclose financial support from these organizations, the existence of a financial relationship does not imply endorsement.

³ As a membership organization, APhA may offer products or services to its members through various member benefit programs. These member benefit programs and offerings are distinguished from organizational endorsement of products, services, or companies. APhA may participate in working groups, task forces, charitable groups, and other entities that are working in alignment with the Association's mission; however, participation in such groups does not imply endorsement of the group itself.

8. APhA will accept external support for core governance activities, development of practice standards, or lobbying or political advocacy activities only in cases in which such support is provided as independent support that allows the Association to maintain sole control over the use of such support.
9. APhA will disclose sources of external support for all activities.
10. APhA enters into relationships with external sources of support whereby the preservation of APhA's control over any projects and products bearing the APhA name or logo remains intact. Moreover, APhA retains editorial control over any information produced as part of an externally supported activity or program.

The APhA Policy for Accepting External Support will be published on the APhA Web site and the Association shall invite anyone to bring to the attention of the APhA Executive Vice President/Chief Executive Officer or the APhA President any related questions about any APhA activity. The APhA Executive Vice President/Chief Executive Officer is responsible for disseminating and enforcing procedures to implement compliance with the APhA Policy for Accepting External Support. The APhA Board of Trustees will review the APhA Policy for Accepting External Support at least every two years and will reaffirm or revise the policy as may be indicated.