



HCOP Position Paper on Relationship with Pharmaceutical and Device Industries

We at HCOP feel that a responsible and productive alliance with pharmaceutical and device companies is possible and desirable, to achieve our organization's goals. However, there are a number of areas in which conflicts of interest, or the perception of conflicts, may arise. These include the potential for bias in our educational programs, research projects, scholarship awards and publications.

As health care providers, our principal ethical obligation is to promote the health and well-being of our patients. As a medical organization, one of our major goals is to pursue this through dissemination of impartial educational material. The primary obligation of industry is to its shareholders, although medical industry research aims to improve patients' quality of life as well. The development of pharmaceutical agents and medical devices that fulfill patient needs should be guided by the clinical experience of health care providers. Thus, a thoughtful collaboration, focusing on common goals, with clear guidelines in place, is essential.

These are our principles in this area:

1. As pertains to HCOP activities, members of its Executive Board will not accept gifts from pharmaceutical or medical device companies, other than educational or clinically useful items of modest value or modest meals accompanying conferences.
2. HCOP shall maintain complete control over educational program planning, content, and delivery. To this end, no representatives of pharmaceutical or device companies will be involved in planning or directing our educational meetings. We will accept only unrestricted grants in support of our educational programs. The sources of these grants will be delineated on our website, and clearly acknowledged at our meetings.
3. Speakers at HCOP conferences will carefully disclose all ties with pharmaceutical and medical device companies including roles as speakers, consultants, investigators or shareholders. This information will be made clear in program syllabi and at the beginning of individual presentations. Course directors at HCOP symposia will make every effort to select potential speakers who do not have significant COI in the topic area of their presentations. HCOP presentations will provide a balanced, impartial view of material and will not endorse specific products. Speakers may accept appropriate honoraria from HCOP for speaking at our conferences commensurate with the time spent on researching and preparing these programs. They may not accept additional honoraria from industry for their presentations.
4. Pharmaceutical and medical device companies' product promotion activities, which occur before, during or after a HCOP conference, will be clearly delineated from educational facets of our meetings. These will include booth product demonstrations, advertisements for products and satellite symposia. HCOP will discourage the distribution of non-educational, non-clinically useful or excessive gifts to attendees at its conferences.



5. HCOP shall maintain complete control over planning, execution and publication of research. To this end, no representatives of pharmaceutical or medical device companies will participate in our selection or design of HCOP research projects, and we will decide when and where to submit results for publication.

6. HCOP shall maintain complete control over grants, awards and scholarships it bestows and will choose recipients in an unbiased fashion. To this end, no representatives of pharmaceutical or medical device companies will be involved at any level in these activities.

7. Corporate discussions with the HCOP board of directors will be held outside of regular board meetings or other official organizational meetings. These may take the form of "Corporate Round Tables", interviews with organization leadership, or ad-hoc advisory board meetings, and will be listed on our website. When possible, contracts will delineate these activities and future expectations.

8. HCOP shall maintain complete control over its policy positions (like this one). To this end, no representatives of pharmaceutical companies will participate in formulating or revising these policies or can ever be a member of or advisor to the Board.