

Ethical and Practical Issues in Commercial Support of Continuing Medical Education

Key Questions for Stakeholders

To help set the overall context for our conversation, the Council on Ethical and Judicial Affairs and Council on Medical Education have framed their ongoing deliberations in reference to the following broad ethical considerations:

1. Ethically preferable practice with respect to commercial funding for CME.
2. Ethically permissible practice, including strategies for managing or mitigating potential conflict of interest or bias.
3. Ethically permissible practice in situations involving uniquely qualified but unavoidably conflicted parties.

A wide range of commentary on commercial support for continuing medical education (CME)¹ has suggested several key questions for thinking about appropriate relationships between medicine and industry in this important area. To move dialogue forward, we will focus our conversation on the following:

- When is conflicted expertise essential in CME? How can we tell when it is no longer needed?
- What unique challenges do you as a stakeholder face regarding CME?
- How can we ensure that medicine sets the agenda for CME overall so that it meets the needs of patients and physicians rather than the interests of commercial supporters?

Please come prepared to share your reflections on these key questions. We welcome written commentary to accompany your contribution to our conversation. We would appreciate receiving any written materials no later than Monday, February 23, 2009. (If you are unable to participate in person, please do send us your written reflections.)

¹ For example, in testimony to the Institute of Medicine Committee on Conflict of Interest in Medical Research, Education, and Practice; responses to the Accreditation Council on Continuing Medical Education calls for comments (2008); and feedback received by the Council on Ethical and Affairs regarding its June 2008 draft report, "Industry Support for Professional Education in Medicine."