

University of Minnesota Medical School

Recommendations on the Oversight of External Relationships

Introduction

University of Minnesota Medical School faculty members' professional duties and efforts encompass the school's missions of education, research, and clinical care and outreach. Relationships with industry are an essential part of our research mission to advance knowledge to benefit patients and people in Minnesota and beyond. Our physicians and scientists, in partnership with medical device companies, pharmaceutical companies, and other life sciences enterprises, have made and continue to make discoveries as well as translate discoveries into treatments.

External professional relationships can, however, result in the potential for conflict of interest. Such relationships could create a circumstance in which an independent observer might reasonably question whether an individual's professional actions or decisions are determined by considerations of personal benefit, financial or otherwise. In addition, questions may arise about potential conflicts of commitment, defined by time or intellectual energies expended on behalf of an external enterprise.

At the University of Minnesota Medical School, we must manage faculty relationships with industry in a manner that maintains our partnerships benefitting patients and advancing care, supports our open academic environment, reaffirms our commitment to help patients, and assures the public's trust in us. To that end, appropriate oversight, disclosure, and transparency are goals in managing industry relationships.

The following set of expectations is intended to help faculty members identify and manage external relationships.

Proposed expectations

- The University of Minnesota Medical School, its physicians, staff, and other health professionals may engage in financial relationships with commercial companies, provided there is an approved written agreement defining such aspects as specific deliverables, goals, services, and fair market compensation.
- On the annual REPA forms, Medical School faculty and staff should report external funding or compensation exceeding \$500 from any one source.
- Prohibited compensation from commercial companies to faculty, staff, and students includes:
 - Payments for switching to or choosing to use a particular product in patient care
 - Payments for referrals
 - Payments/honoraria associated with sales and marketing, such as for listening to a presentation or speaking on behalf of a product or company outside of a defined consultant role. This does not preclude consultants with a defined relationship to speak within the context of their consultancy.

- Payments made solely for enrolling patients in a research study; i.e., that are beyond the cost of conducting the study.
 - Gifts to individuals (other than promotional items without significant value).
 - Industry representatives may not directly provide meals or other types of food for any educational or professional activity of the Medical School, anywhere on the campus. Faculty, staff, and trainees are strongly encouraged not to accept such meals. Food provided in conjunction with events sponsored by multiple vendors is not prohibited.
- Those faculty with financial relationships with industry must disclose them to patients, to colleagues, to editors, and to students (including residents and fellows). Disclosure will be made in a standard format on a Web site that is accessible to relevant parties, perhaps to be modeled after the CME disclosure format.
 - It is recognized that clinical fellowship training in some subspecialty areas is at times funded by industry. Such sponsorship must be carefully managed. Industry funding should not be associated with a particular fellowship position; the name of the corporate sponsor should not be tied to the fellowship; the sponsor may not influence the training opportunities provided to the fellow.
 - Faculty with a financial interest in a product may engage in discussions but may not participate in decisions to purchase that product.
 - Expectations on industry relationships, conflict of commitment and conflict of interest apply to all areas of research, not only human subjects' research.
 - Instruction in professionalism for students should include the value of industry relationships as well as conflict-of-interest issues.
 - Industry representatives may be invited to help train students in the use of new devices or products; they may not, however, initiate contact with students. They must seek permission from physicians in charge of education at that site.
 - All University of Minnesota Medical School continuing medical education programs and courses, whether or not they utilize industry funding, must be subject to the guidelines of the ACCME.
 - Pharmaceutical samples shall be distributed centrally by UMMC or UMPHysicians. Over the counter product samples should not be distributed.
 - Faculty, staff, and students are prohibited from claiming authorship of work written by corporate sponsored "ghostwriters".

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