

	Policy for Commercial Support	
Continuing Education	Original Date: 5/15/2015 Revision Date: 2/12/2020 Effective Date: 2/12/2020	Approved By:  <hr/> Signature Title: Director of Continuing Education Approval Date: 2/12/2020

Purpose:

The purpose of this policy is to ensure that CE activities are independent and free of commercial bias. Education that is commercially biased detracts from the learning experience and impacts the intended outcome of the educational activity. Failure to follow this policy will adversely affect the status of Hartford HealthCare as an accredited provider of CE.

The following policy is based on the Standards for Commercial SupportSM: Accreditation Council for Continuing Medical Education (ACCME) Standards to Ensure Independence in CME Activities.

Scope:

This policy applies to the HHC Community, credentialed community providers, and external providers seeking *AMA PRA Category 1 Credit(s)TM* for an educational activity.

Policy:

All certified CE provided to the HHC community will comply with ACCME and Connecticut State Medical Society (CSMS) standards and shall be made in

accordance with the applicable processes and procedures of the Continuing Education (CE) Team.

Guidelines:

- Standard 1: Independence
 - The CE Team must ensure that the following decisions are made free of the control of a commercial interest. A commercial interest cannot be involved in the:
 - Identification of CE needs;
 - Determination of educational objectives;
 - Selection and presentation of content;
 - Selection of all persons and organizations in a position to control the content of the CE, including planners, directors, and faculty;
 - Selection of educational methods, including type of learning activity and supplemental learning materials;
 - Evaluation of the activity.
 - There are rare instances where we will allow an employee of a commercial interest to serve as faculty and/or planner of an accredited CE activity.
 - If a medical device is currently in use in our healthcare system, a representative of that manufacturer may participate in planning and presenting education on the safe usage of that device only, but may not act as Activity Medical Director for that event.
 - Should it be determined a commercial interest has been involved in any of the above without the knowledge of the HHC CE Team, CE will not be approved for that activity.
 - A commercial interest cannot take the role of a non-accredited partner in a joint provider relationship.
- Standard 2: Resolution of Personal Conflicts of Interest
 - The CE Team must be able to show that everyone who is in a position to control the content of an education activity has disclosed all relevant financial relationships with any commercial interest to the CE Team.
 - The CE Team has implemented a Resolution of Conflict of Interest Policy in order to identify and resolve all conflicts of interest prior to the approval and delivery of the educational activity.
 - Planners may provide access for learners to purchase the speaker's publications provided that the following guidelines are met:
 - Sales are held only following the educational event

- Prior to or during the educational event, there may be no promotion of the speaker's publications
 - The sale location must be in a separate location from the educational venue
 - The speaker will defer any questions regarding his publications until after the education has concluded
- Standard 3: Appropriate Use of Commercial Support
 - The CE Team must review all decisions regarding the disposition and disbursement of commercial support.
 - A commercial interest may not require the planners of the event to accept advice or services concerning faculty, authors, or participants or other education issues, including content, from a commercial interest as a condition of contributing funds or services.
 - All commercial support associated with a CE activity must be given with the full knowledge and advance approval of the CE Team.
 - The terms, conditions, and purposes of the commercial support must be documented in a written agreement between the commercial supporter, the CE team, and the sponsoring department. The agreement must be on file with the CE team, even if the support is given directly to the sponsoring department or a joint provider.
 - The written agreement must specify the commercial interest that is the source of the support as well as the amount and/or type of commercial support. A written agreement is required for both financial as well as "in-kind" support.
 - The sponsoring department shall follow HHC policies and procedures (see related documents) governing honoraria and reimbursement of out-of-pocket expenses for planners, faculty, and authors.
 - The CE Team, the joint provider, or sponsoring department must pay directly any faculty or author honoraria or reimbursement of out-of-pocket expenses in compliance with the HHC policies and procedures (see Related Documents: Financial and Commercial Support Form)
 - No other payment shall be given to the director of the activity, planning committee members, faculty or authors, joint provider, or any others involved with the supported activity.
 - If faculty or authors are listed on the agenda as facilitating or conducting a presentation or session, but participate in the remainder of an educational event as a learner, their expenses can be reimbursed and honoraria can be paid for their faculty or author role only.
 - Social events or meals at CE activities cannot compete with or take precedence over the educational events.

- An agenda must be provided that reflects the separate times for each activity.
 - CE may be provided for educational activities that take place over a “working meal”, as long as the agenda reflects the separate opportunity for the learner to prepare their meal.
 - The sponsoring department may not use commercial support to pay for travel, lodging, honoraria, or personal expenses for non-faculty or non-author participants of a CE activity.
 - The sponsoring department may use commercial support to pay for travel, lodging, honoraria, or personal expenses for bona fide employees and volunteers of the provider, joint provider, or educational partner.
 - The sponsoring department must provide accurate documentation detailing the final receipts and the expenditures of the commercial support to the CE Team within 4 weeks of the completion of the activity.
- Standard 4: Appropriate Management of Associated Commercial Promotion
 - Arrangements for commercial exhibits or advertisements cannot influence planning or interfere with the presentation, nor can they be a condition of the provision of commercial support for CE activities.
 - Product-promotion material or product-specific advertisement of any type is prohibited in or during CE activities.
 - The juxtaposition of editorial and advertising material on the same products or subjects must be avoided.
 - Live (staffed exhibits, presentations) or enduring (printed or electronic advertisements) promotional activities must be kept separate from CE.
 - Vendors or promotional activities must be outside of the education location and cannot be available during the education itself.
 - Printed advertisements and promotional materials will not be interleaved within the pages of the CE content.
 - Advertisements and promotional materials may face the first or last pages of printed CE content, as long as these materials are not related to the CE content they face, and are not paid for by the commercial supporters of the CE activity.
 - For computer-based CE activities, advertisements and promotional materials may not be visible on the screen at the same time as the CE content and not interleaved between computer windows or screens of the CE content.

- CE activities shall not be placed on a Web site owned or controlled by a commercial interest. With clear notification that the learner is leaving the educational Web site, links from the Web site of an approved CE activity to pharmaceutical and device manufacturers' product Web sites are permitted before or after the educational content of a CE activity, but shall not be embedded in the educational content of a CE activity.
- Advertising of any type is prohibited within the educational content of CE activities on the Internet including, but not limited to, banner ads, subliminal ads, and pop-up window ads.
- For audio and video recording, advertisements and promotional materials will not be included within the CE. There will be no 'commercial breaks.'
- For live, face-to-face CE, advertisements and promotional materials cannot be displayed or distributed in the educational space immediately before, during, or after a CE activity.
- Sponsoring departments cannot allow representatives of Commercial Interests to engage in sales or promotional activities while in the space or place of the CE activity.
- For journal-based CE, none of the elements of journal-based CE can contain any advertising or product group messages of commercial interests. The learner must not encounter advertising within the pages of the article or within the pages of the related questions or evaluation materials.
- Educational materials that are part of a CE activity, such as slides, abstracts, and handouts, cannot contain any advertising, corporate logos, trade names, or a product-group message of an ACCME-defined commercial interest (see definitions).
- Print or electronic information distributed about the non-CE elements of a CE activity that are not directly related to the transfer of education to the learner, such as schedules and content descriptions, may include product-promotion material or product-specific advertisement.
- A CE cannot use a commercial interest as the agent providing a CE activity to learners, e.g., distribution of self-study CE activities, or arranging for electronic access to CE activities.

- Standard 5: Content and Format without Commercial Bias
 - The content or format of a CE activity or its related materials must promote improvements or quality in healthcare and not a specific proprietary business interest of a commercial interest.
 - Presentations must give a balanced view of therapeutic options. Use of generic names will contribute to this impartiality. If the CE educational material or content includes trade names, available trade names from several companies should be used (where available) and not just trade names from a single company.

- Standard 6: Disclosures Relevant to Potential Commercial Bias
 - An individual (see definitions) must disclose to learners any relevant financial relationship(s), to include the following information:
 - The name and role of the individual;
 - The name of the commercial interest(s);
 - The nature of the relationship the person has with each commercial interest.
 - An individual who refuses to disclose relevant financial relationships will be disqualified from all roles related to the CE program, other than as a learner, and cannot have control of, or responsibility for, the development, management, presentation, or evaluation of the CE activity.
 - An individual with no relevant financial relationship(s) must disclose to learners that no relevant financial relationship(s) exist.
 - The source of all support from commercial interests must be disclosed to learners. When commercial support is "in-kind" the nature of the support must be disclosed to learners.
 - 'Disclosure' must never include the use of a corporate logo, trade name, or a product-group message of an ACCME-defined commercial interest.
 - A sponsoring department must disclose the above information to learners prior to the beginning of the educational activity, either verbally or in print, depending on the educational activity type.
 - Symposia: Disclosures must be provided to the learners in writing prior to the beginning of the activity. This can include either a slide (provided by the CE team) or printed on the promotional materials.
 - Grand Rounds:

Definitions:

- *HHC Community*: includes all employees, volunteers, students and contracted individuals, including, without limitation, medical directors,

section, department and division chiefs, members of the board of directors and board delegated committees, officers, executive leadership, and trainees

- *Credentialed Community Providers*: Non-employed providers with practicing privileges throughout Hartford HealthCare
- *External Providers*: Providers with no affiliation nor privileges at a Hartford HealthCare entity
- *Commercial Interest*: any entity producing, marketing, re-selling, or distributing health care goods or services consumed by or used on patients with the exemption of 501c non-profit organizations, government organizations, non-health care related companies, liability insurance providers, health insurance providers, group medical practices, for-profit hospitals, for-profit rehabilitation centers, and for-profit nursing homes
- *CE Team*: Hartford HealthCare Continuing Education Team
- *Sponsoring Department*: the primary department or providers responsible for planning, presenting and evaluating the CE Activity
- *Individual*: a person, including their spouse or significant other
- *Relevant Financial Interest*: any financial relationship in any amount occurring within the past 12 months that creates a potential or perceived conflict of interest. Financial benefits could be other than monetary.

References:

- [ACCME Standards of Commercial Support](#)

Related Policies:

- HHC Vendor Interaction Policy
- HHC CE Honoraria and Reimbursement Policy
- HHC CE Conflict of Interest Policy
- HHC CE Disclosure Policy
- HHC CE Resolution of Conflicts of Interest Policy

Related Documents:

- Commercial Support Agreement
- Resolution of Conflict of Interest Form
- ACCME Conflict of Interest Flowchart
- Speaker Financial Disclosure
- Planner Financial Disclosure
- Financial and Commercial Support Form