

Policy on Resident Interactions with Vendor Representatives

The purpose of this policy is to establish guidelines for interactions with industry representatives for residents in graduate medical education programs sponsored by the West Virginia University School of Medicine. Interactions with industry occur in a variety of contexts, including marketing of new pharmaceutical products, medical devices, and research equipment as well as on-site training of newly purchased devices. Many aspects of these interactions are positive and important for promoting the educational, clinical and research missions of the institution. However, these interactions must be ethical and cannot create conflicts of interest that could endanger patient safety, data integrity, and the integrity of our education and training programs.

It is the policy of the West Virginia University School of Medicine GMEC that interactions with industry and its vendors should be conducted so as to avoid or minimize conflicts of interest. When conflicts of interest do arise they must be addressed appropriately.

Consistent with the guidelines established by the American Medical Association Statement on Gifts to Physicians, acceptance of gifts from industry vendors is discouraged. Any gifts accepted by residents should not be of substantial value. Accordingly, textbooks, modest meals, and other gifts are appropriate only if they serve a genuine educational function. Cash payments should not be accepted. The use of drug samples for personal or family use is permissible as long as these practices do not interfere with patient access to drug samples. Residents may not accept gifts or compensation for listening to a sales talk by an industry representative. Residents may not accept gifts or compensation for prescribing or changing a patient's prescription. Residents must consciously separate clinical care decisions from any perceived or actual benefits expected from any company. It is unacceptable for patient care decisions to be influenced by the possibility of personal financial gain.

Industry vendors are not permitted in any patient care areas except to provide in-service training on devices and other equipment and then only by appointment. Industry vendors are permitted in non-patient care areas by appointment only.

Appointments may be made on a per visit basis or as a standing appointment for a specified period of time, with the approval of the program director or department chair, or designated hospital or clinic personnel issuing the invitation.

Vendor support of educational conferences involving resident physicians may be used provided that the funds are provided to the institution not directly to the resident. The program director should determine if the funded conference or program has educational merit. The institution must not be subject to any implicit or explicit expectation of providing something in return for the support. Financial support by industry should be fully disclosed by the meeting sponsor. The meeting or lecture content must be determined by the speaker and not the industrial sponsor. The lecturer is expected to provide a fair and balanced assessment of therapeutic options and to promote objective scientific and educational activities and discourse.

All residents should receive training by the teaching faculty regarding potential conflicts of interest in interactions with industry vendors.