

Office of Continuing Medical Education

Standards for Commercial Support

Texas Heart Institute adheres to the Standards for Commercial Support of Continuing Medical Education of the Accreditation Council for Continuing Medical Education (ACCME) and the American Medical Association (AMA).

A. Standards to Ensure Independence in CME Activities

1. Texas Heart Institute will ensure that the following decisions are made free of the control of a commercial interest. The Institute defines a “commercial interest” as any proprietary entity producing health care goods or services, with the exception of non-profit or government organizations and non-health care related companies.
 - Identification of CME needs.
 - Determination of educational objectives.
 - Selection and presentation of content.
 - Selection of all persons and organizations that will be in a position to control the content of the CME.
 - Selection of educational methods.
 - Evaluation of the activity.
2. A commercial interest cannot take the role of a non-CME accredited partner in any joint sponsorship relationship with the Texas Heart Institute.

B. Resolution of Personal Conflicts of Interest and Commercial Bias

1. Texas Heart Institute is responsible for identifying and resolving all conflicts of interest prior to a CME activity being delivered to an audience of learners.
2. Texas Heart Institute requires that anyone who is in a position to control the content of an educational activity has disclosed all relevant financial relationships with any commercial interest to the Institute. The Institute defines “relevant financial relationships” as financial relationships in any amount occurring within the past 12 months that create a conflict of interest.
3. An individual must disclose to the audience any relevant financial relationship(s). Information disclosed will include the a) name of the individual; b) name of the commercial interest; and c) nature of the relationship the individual has with the commercial interest.

In general terms, any relationship that may bias one’s presentation or contribution, or which, if known, could give the perception of bias, should be disclosed. These situations may include but are not limited to: a) stock options or

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- bond holding in a for-profit corporation or self-directed pension plan; b) research grants; c) employment, either full or part-time; d) ownership or partnership; e) consulting fees or other remuneration received by the presenter or his/her immediate family, including any support that may be provided to attend the educational meeting; f) non-remunerative positions of influence such as officer, board member, trustee, or public spokesperson; g) receipt of royalties; and h) speaker's bureau.
4. An individual with no relevant financial relationship(s) must declare such so that the audience can be informed that no relevant financial relationship(s) exist.
 5. Any individual who refuses to disclose relevant financial relationships will not be allowed to serve on a planning committee, faculty or author of any Texas Heart Institute CME activity. Such individual will not be allowed to have any control of, or responsibility for, the development, management, presentation or evaluation of any Texas Heart Institute CME activity.
 6. The Texas Heart Institute requires that the content and format of a CME activity or its related materials promote improvements or quality in health care and not a specific proprietary business interest of a commercial interest.
 7. All presentations are required to give a balanced view of therapeutic options. Use of generic names will contribute to this impartiality. If the CME educational material or content includes trade names, where available, trade names from several companies should be used, not just trade names from a single company.
 8. Faculty disclosures for a specific CME activity will be routinely reviewed by the activity's program director and/or designee to assure that the Institute's policy is being properly implemented. The completed disclosure statements will be retained by the Institute for a period of six years.

C. Appropriate Use of Commercial Support

1. The Texas Heart Institute is responsible for all aspects and phases of its CME program and activities. This includes all decisions regarding the disposition and disbursement of commercial support.
2. The Texas Heart Institute does not accept advice or services concerning speakers, authors, or participants or other education matters, including content, from a commercial interest as conditions of contributing funds or services.
3. All commercial support associated with a Texas Heart Institute CME activity must be given in full knowledge and with approval of the Institute.

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4. The terms, conditions and purposes of the commercial support must be documented in a written agreement between the commercial supporter, the Texas Heart Institute, and where appropriate, the Institute's education partner(s). The agreement must include the Institute, even if the support is given directly to the Institute's educational partner or a joint sponsor.
5. The written agreement must specify the commercial interest that is the source of commercial support.
6. Both the commercial supporter and the Institute must sign the written agreement.
7. Upon request, the Texas Heart Institute will produce accurate documentation showing the receipt and expenditure of all commercial support to the educational partner(s), joint sponsor, and commercial supporter(s).
8. The Texas Heart Institute may, if it so elects, use commercial support funding to pay honoraria and expenses associated with guest faculty for any of its CME activities.
9. The amount of any honorarium to be paid to a speaker at an approved educational activity is established by the Office of Continuing Medical Education, in consultation with the Medical Education Committee, and based upon current industry standards.
10. The Texas Heart Institute will not provide honoraria to faculty who are employed by the Institute or who are members of the Institute's professional staff. Expense reimbursement for faculty employed by the Institute or members of the Institute's professional staff will be made according to the Institute's Travel and Business Entertainment policy.
11. Reimbursement for expenses related to guest faculty participation in an educational activity will be approved by the Office of Continuing Medical Education prior to incurring the expense. Reimbursement for guest faculty shall be requested using the Travel Expense Report form provided by the Office of Continuing Medical Education.
12. No other payment will be given to the director of an activity, planning committee members, speakers, authors, joint sponsors, or any others involved with a supported Texas Heart Institute CME activity.

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13. Funds from commercial supporters may be used to pay for social events or meals at CME activities; however, such events must not compete with or take precedence over the educational activities.
14. The Texas Heart Institute will not use commercial support to pay for travel, lodging, honoraria, or personal expenses for non-faculty participants of a CME activity. The Institute may use funds from commercial supporters to pay for travel, lodging, or personal expenses of Institute employees and volunteers who are providing bona fide services at the CME activity.
15. The Texas Heart Institute disclosures will not include the use of a trade name or a product-group message.
16. The Texas Heart Institute will disclose all commercial support to the audience prior to the beginning of an educational activity. When commercial support is “in-kind” the nature of the support will also be disclosed to the audience.

D. Management of Associated Commercial Promotion

1. Arrangements for commercial exhibits or advertisements must not influence planning or interfere with the presentations, nor can they be a condition of the provision of commercial support for a Texas Heart Institute CME activity.
2. Product-promotion material or product-specific advertisement of any type is prohibited in or during a Texas Heart Institute CME activity. All live (staffed exhibits, presentations) or enduring (printed or electronic advertisements) promotional activities must be kept separate from a Texas Heart Institute CME activity.
3. Educational materials that are part of a Texas Heart Institute CME activity, such as slides, abstracts and handouts, should not contain advertising, trade name or a product-group message. If a CME educational material includes trade names, available trade names from several companies should be used, not just trade names from a single company.
4. Print or electronic information distributed about the non-CME element of a Texas Heart Institute CME activity that is not directly related to the transfer of education to the audience, such as schedules and content descriptions, may include product-promotion material or product-specific advertisement.
5. The Texas Heart Institute will not use a commercial interest as an agent providing a CME activity to an audience.