

World Organization of Family Doctors

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Annex 1 – Terms and Conditions of Sponsorship of Educational Activities at WONCA Conferences

An ethical relationship with sponsorship organisations in relation to the delivery of education to healthcare professionals is essential. The primary purpose of education activities accredited by The World Organisation of Family Doctors (WONCA) is to improve the quality of patient care. The education material covered within the activity must meet clinical and ethical standards.

The education being provided or delivered to Family Practitioners/General Practitioners must be completely independent of the sponsoring organization and from any brief to the facilitator/speaker/writer as to the education materials that should be delivered, covered, revised and/or edited.

Provider organizations are required to be transparent regarding sponsorship arrangements and must declare that an education activity is sponsored and by whom each time the activity is promoted, advertised and delivered. Speakers are also required to make their own conflict declaration regarding whether they are being paid or receiving other benefits or inducements from the sponsorship organization prior to the activity being delivered.

Speaker costs for attendance at WONCA conference may not be covered directly by sponsors. All sponsorship must be through WONCA or the Host Organizing Committee for the conference. WONCA and the Host Organizing Committee will be responsible for ensuring best use of the funds and for providing clear accounts to justify expenditure or disbursement. Contracts with sponsors will be available for review by any WONCA Member Organization.

WONCA will not endorse an educational activity if there is input from its sponsor(s) to the design, development, education content or the delivery of the activity. WONCA considers such input to be a conflict of interest and a breach of its ethical policy and criteria.

1. WONCA will not endorse education activities that directly or indirectly promote:
 - a. Product brand names
 - b. Claims for the benefits of modes of treatment that are disproportionate to their expected contribution to good quality patient care.
 - c. Products or modes of treatment in areas of clinical practice where accepted management standards are lacking and a balanced rationale is not provided.
 - d. Experimental treatments and methods that have not been fully evaluated by intervention research and meta-analysis.

- e. Experimental treatments which do not have the support of the medical profession because there is inconclusive evidence that these treatments deliver therapeutic benefits.
 - f. Theories that are not supported by scientific evidence or substantive scholarly debate. Whilst we may discuss new paradigms, we shall not endorse these unless they have been found to be consistent with high quality professional practice and patient care.
 - g. Techniques which do not have the support of scientific evidence, or the medical profession as preferred techniques or which are not supported by accepted medical theory.
2. When there is uncertainty about the clinical, scientific or ethical standards of an educational activity, WONCA reserves the right to seek clarification on the program design and evidence-based methodology and to reject the activity if in the sole discretion of WONCA it fails to meet the clinical and ethical requirements in line with the objectives of the organisation (WONCA).
 3. WONCA will not support sponsorship from organizations which promote products incompatible with health, such as tobacco, alcohol or firearms. No material will be acceptable if it conveys bias and/or discrimination on the basis of race, colour, sex, language, religion, political or other opinion, national or social origin, property, birth or other status.
 4. Sponsors may deliver presentations related to a company product; however, such presentations or input must:
 - Be an addendum and completely separated from the educational activity being delivered
 - Not involve the speaker/facilitator of the education activity in any way.
 - Not be used when determining the duration of an activity when calculating the number of CPD points that will be allocated.
 5. The Executive Board of WONCA, through the CEO:
 - May control sponsoring organizations, products and product areas and can express its concerns to the HOC when it finds violation of the rules of these sponsoring guidelines.
 - May control the content of publicity material and may intervene to reject it, if it is felt to be against these guidelines.
 - Will discuss any decision taken with the HOC in order to prevent jeopardizing the HOC's financial stability, whilst at the same time ensuring that these guidelines are upheld.

Entertainment and meals should be separated from the focus of the educational activity, which is the education content. Trade displays may precede or follow the educational activity, but may not be integrated with the education activity in any manner. In some countries, additional specific guidelines may apply, and HOC has a responsibility for ensuring that their arrangements also comply with these.

As part of WONCA's quality assurance process, sponsors are required to provide family physicians or general practitioners who attend and/or participate in an accredited activity the opportunity to submit feedback about the quality and conduct of the activity delivered to them. All HOCs must

ensure the activity feedback form is available to all family physicians and general practitioners who participate in an accredited activity as a condition of activity accreditation.