



Ethics Guidelines for Industry Sponsorships

February 10, 2015

Definitions

Conflict of interest

A conflict of interest can be an actual, perceived, or potential conflict between the professional duty of a Registered Nurse (RN) or Registered Nurse (Nurse Practitioner) RN(NP) and his or her private interests. Conflict of interest could occur in any domain of nursing practice including but not limited to clinical practice, education, administration or research. RN and RN(NP)s are expected to be knowledgeable about existing employer conflict of interest policy.

Industry sponsorship

Industry sponsorship consists of any financial, personal, political, or academic advantage offered by a private, for-profit, or commercial enterprise as part of its marketing and public relations efforts. In health care, industry sponsors typically include pharmaceutical companies, information technology businesses and medical equipment manufacturers.

General Guidelines

Resolution of conflicts of interest

The main purpose of any professional interactions between an RN or RN(NP) and private industry should be to improve the health of the people she/he serves. Any conflict of interest, actual or perceived, must be resolved in favour of the interests of the people RNs and RN(NP)s serve.

Maintenance of public trust

Industry sponsorship shall in no way be allowed to reduce the trust that the people they serve place in RNs and RN(NP)s or in the SRNA.

Consistency with ethics and purpose

Any industry sponsorship of RNs and RN(NP)s or their professional events must be consistent with the Canadian Nurses Association Code of Ethics of Registered Nurses. Any industry sponsorship of SRNA events must be consistent with the mandate of the SRNA.

Transparency and full disclosure

There must be transparency and full disclosure of any industry sponsorship and of any actual or apparent conflicts of interest to which it might lead.

Option to be more restrictive

An individual RN or RN(NP) or event organizers may choose to be more restrictive in their choices about industry sponsorship than provided in these guidelines.

Specific Guidelines

Gifts and entertainment

RNs and RN(NP)s must fully disclose any gifts or entertainment offered them by private industry in their professional role. RNs and RN(NP)s may only accept from private industry inexpensive gifts of materials or supplies of a professional nature that will enhance their workplace.

Private advantage

RNs and RN(NP)s must fully disclose any private advantage that they actually or potentially may receive through industry sponsorship.

Sponsorship of individuals

Any sponsorship of individual RNs and RN(NP)s by industry, such as to educational events, must be fully disclosed.

Marketing

RNs and RN(NP)s may only have marketing relationships with industry that are fully disclosed and that involve no financial compensation or other rewards.

Sponsorship of events and organizations

Any sponsorship of the events and organizations of RNs and RN(NP)s must be fully publicly disclosed. Private industry may sponsor educational and other events as long as industry sponsors have no control over the program and selection of speakers.

Advisory roles

Any advisory role of an RN or RN(NP) to industry must be fully publicly disclosed. RNs and RN(NP)s shall accept no payment for acting as a consultant or advisor to private industry other than reasonable direct costs of participating, such as travel costs to reasonable locations for the purpose of the meeting or consultation.

Compliance

Compliance with these guidelines is a professional responsibility.

Research

RNs and RN(NP)s may participate only in scientific research approved by an independent research ethics board and only in genuine research seeking new scientific knowledge using valid methods, not in marketing activities under the guise of research. Such research shall not include any agreements requiring the RN and RN(NP) or others to maintain confidentiality of research results beyond a reasonable short period. RNs and RN(NP)s may not accept finders' fees for recruiting patients to research studies for private industry.

References

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Nurses Association of New Brunswick. (2011). *Practice guideline: Conflict of interest*. Retrieved from http://www.nanb.nb.ca/downloads/Practice%20Guideline-%20Conflict%20of%20Interest_E_New%20Cover.pdf

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