



AMERICAN ASSOCIATION OF MEDICAL SOCIETY EXECUTIVES
555 East Wells Street, Suite 1100, Milwaukee, WI 53202 ♦ 414-221-9275 ♦ FAX 414-276-3349
Web Site: www.aamse.org

September 12, 2008

Murray M. Kopelow, MD, MS, FRCPC
Chief Executive Officer
Accreditation Council for Continuing Medical Education
515 N. State Street, Suite 1801
Chicago, IL 60654

Dear Dr. Kopelow:

The American Association of Medical Society Executives (AAMSE) appreciates the opportunity to comment on ACCME's position that *"due consideration be given to the elimination of commercial support of continuing medical education activities. The proposal is that the commercial support of continuing medical education end."*

AAMSE is the professional organization of more than 900 medical society executives and staff specialists. Through its more than 380 member organizations, it advances the profession of medicine through education, communication of knowledge, leadership development and collaboration.

AAMSE fully supports the ACCME Standards for Commercial Support, including the 2004 updates. Taken as a whole, these standards, and the criteria for meeting them, ensure that CME educational content offered by accredited providers remains free from commercial bias. Moreover, if ACCME adopts stricter provider compliance procedures – as proposed – such procedures will build an even stronger firewall against the mere possibility of commercial bias. For these reasons, AAMSE does not support the proposal to end commercial support of CME.

Medical societies have invested great effort and resources in recent years to help develop and set standards for industry support, as well as to embrace and fully comply with new and stringent standards for continuing medical education set by ACCME. We believe strongly that providers and regulatory bodies have made substantial improvements in the regulation of CME in recent years. These standards have already been adopted by accredited CME providers and most, if not all, industry funders. Before drastic and wholesale changes are made in the current system, the positive and proactive progress that has been made must be given a chance for full implementation and evaluation.

As you are aware, AAMSE recently convened an Advisory Council on continuing professional development and medical education. Its recommendations to medical association and specialty society leadership will encourage formation of strategic alliances between the continuing medical education and quality improvement arenas; such alliances hold great promise for ensuring the highest quality education possible resulting in improved physician competence, performance and patient outcomes.

We agree that the relationship between industry and CME providers warrants careful, thoughtful and transparent scrutiny to assess whether processes and mechanisms are working, both to prevent industry influence and improve medical education quality. We believe, however, that eliminating industry funding of certified CME in its entirety will marginalize critical roles that industry, and many physicians working in industry, play in critical medical research alliances. The practical impact of such a funding ban would greatly diminish not only the availability or quantity of certified medical education, but its quality as well. The scenario will not serve the needs or interests of patients and physicians, both striving to increase quality of care.

Progress in all endeavors is ultimately based on building strong partnerships and alliances, and building trust. The CME community and medical societies are providing outstanding leadership in building those alliances and demanding a high standard of transparency and trust. They need time to fulfill their vision of the future of CME.

Sincerely,



Cal Chaney, JD, CAE
AAMSE President
Associate Executive Director, Policy,
And General Counsel
American College of Emergency Physicians

cc: AAMSE Board of Directors
AAMSE Advisory Council for the Medical Education
Leadership Forum