

7 July 2022

Dear Partner in Healthcare

Recently, there have been reports of some Health Care Professionals (HCPs) accepting and, in some instances, soliciting direct sponsorships from medical technology suppliers, to attend local and international third party arranged educational congresses. In 2017, the South African Medical Technology Industry Association (SAMED) implemented a prohibition on direct sponsorship of HCPs to third party arranged educational congresses by SAMED members as part of the Medical Device Code of Ethical Marketing & Business Practice ([the Code](#)).

This aligns with international best practice and HPCSA Booklet 11: Guidelines on over servicing, perverse incentives, and related matters:

“3.13.4 Funding - Funds for continuing professional development activities should preferably be in the form of an educational grant payable to the healthcare provider organisation arranging the activity.

3.13.5 Travel, lodging and other expenses with regard to the attendance of CPD events - No travel or lodging costs or other expenses should be paid by the industry directly to the individual healthcare practitioners to attend a CPD event. However, indirect funding or scholarship of CPD events may be permissible in instances where, such sponsorships are paid to the organisers of the CPD events who in turn will identify, through a transparent selection process, deserving candidates based on such factors as historically disadvantaged individual’s status, gender, geographical location in terms of rural and inaccessible locations, young practitioners and developing practitioners etc.”

SAMED views direct sponsorships as unethical as it may compromise a HCP’s independent clinical judgement and thus impact patient care. Medical device companies that are NOT signatories to the Code continue to offer direct sponsorship, leaving signatories feeling little can be done to put an end to the direct influence it may garner.

However, this is NOT so!

While these sponsoring companies are not signatories of the Code, they are representatives, either as distributors or subsidiaries, of multinational entities with headquarters in Europe or the USA who are bound by international codes that prohibit direct sponsorship.

We urge HCPs and medical technology companies not to engage in this practice and anyone aware of it should not hold back reporting such findings. Violations can be reported via the [SAMED Whistle Blowing Hotline](#) and SAMED will report this to their principal(s) (head office) - many of which have their own hotlines for reporting transgressions – as the local company’s conduct is a reputational risk for the principal(s).

Should HCP details be included in the report, the Independent Ethics Chair will share these with the Healthcare Professions Council of South Africa (HPCSA) to investigate as such alleged practice is in contravention of HPCSA Booklet 11 conduct rules.

- We call on Professional societies to bring this matter to the attention of their members and share with them details of the whistle blowing hotline.
- We call on SAMED members to bring this to the attention of their HCP customers and staff to empower them to capture evidence and report such instances as soon as they happen.

Without collective action being taken to stop this unethical conduct in the medical technology Industry, we are reinforcing a perception that healthcare is no longer about care. We cannot look the other way; action must be taken.

Take back your dignity and your right to be a part of an ethical healthcare industry!!



**BLOW THE WHISTLE**


**DON'T SUPPORT IT. REPORT IT.**

Call the Medical Device Code Anonymous Hotline on

**0800 000 468 or visit [samed.org.za](http://samed.org.za)**

\* Independently managed by Deloitte on behalf of the South African Medical Technology Industry Association (SAMED). SAMED supports the President's Health Sector Anti-Corruption Forum

Kind regards



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