

honoraria and to accept reimbursement for reasonable travel, lodging, and meal expenses...

(6) Scholarship or other special funds to permit medical students, residents, and fellows to attend carefully selected educational conferences may be permissible as long as the selection of students, residents, or fellows who will receive the funds is made by the academic or training institution...

(7) No gifts should be accepted if there are strings attached...

Some of the gift-giving practices by industry are ethical and beneficial to patients. Nonetheless, the practice of gift giving raises a number of ethical concerns. First, industry invests in promotional activities because promotions increase sales. There is no evidence that physicians knowingly or intentionally compromise their patients' care as a result of gifts from industry. Nevertheless, the practice of gift giving may subtly influence practice patterns such that they are based on considerations other than scientific knowledge and patient needs. Moreover, gifts may also affect a physician's continuing education because physicians only have time to attend a limited number of conferences, and industry can make their conferences more attractive by subsidizing the costs of attending.

Second, even if gifts from industry have no effect on a physician's practices, there may be a public impression of impropriety, especially if the gifts are of substantial value. Public trust in physicians may be undermined if it appears that the choice of a drug, device, or other product is influenced by the fact that the physician received a gift from the company that manufactures the product.

Finally, the costs of gifts from industry to physicians are ultimately passed on to the public. In effect, patients pay for a benefit that may be experienced primarily by their physicians.

For further discussion of this topic, see also the "Clarification of Opinion 8.061, Gifts to Physicians from Industry" in the *Code*, and see <www.ama-assn.org/go/ethicalgifts>, especially module 4.

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