

Guidelines for CMA's Activities and Relationships with Other Parties

As the national voice of medicine in Canada, the CMA provides leadership for physicians, promotes the highest standards of health and health care for Canadians and acts as advocate for all Canadian physicians. In the furtherance of its purpose, the CMA conducts a variety of activities and has a variety of relationships with other parties. The CMA's activities range from policy development to the delivery of products and services to physicians and the public. Its relationships with other parties range from the purchase of goods and services that support operations to partnerships that further or are consistent with its advocacy strategies.

The CMA actively seeks out relationships with others in recognition of the benefits these bring in the attainment of the CMA's purposes. Such benefits may include:

- unifying the profession through relations with physician groups, including the divisions and affiliates
- enabling a stronger advocacy voice in association with others
- enhancing the CMA's credibility with other parties
- providing financial and human resources to support CMA activities
- providing skills and capabilities that CMA may not possess
- providing additional membership services

Activities or relationships with other parties and products and services produced through the activity

or relationship ("activities or relationships")¹ that undermine the CMA's reputation of professionalism, independence and quality are to be avoided, not only for their own sake but also because a diminishment of the CMA's reputation impedes its ability to achieve its purposes.

The following principles have been developed to help guide decisions about the kinds of activities CMA undertakes and about its relations with other parties, with the objective of ensuring the integrity and good reputation of the CMA. A process or processes will be developed to implement the principles, which will include the preparation of subdocuments on applying the principles to specific areas; for example, sponsorship, endorsement and coalitions.

¹ These include the activities of the secretariat and the corporate subsidiaries.

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All policies of the CMA are available electronically through CMA Online (www.cma.ca).

Principles

The CMA should rigorously and actively pursue its laudable ends and seek out relationships with others to attain them with the caveat that activities or relationships that would tarnish the integrity or reputation of CMA or the medical profession or that would diminish the trust placed in them should be avoided.

1. *Conformity with CMA's purpose*

The activity or relationship should further or support the CMA's purposes as elaborated in its objects, vision and mission.

- The CMA's purposes have been explicitly and widely agreed upon.
- The CMA holds itself to be, and encourages reliance that it is, an organization that pursues its specified purposes.
- Activities and relationships that do not further or support the CMA's purposes have the potential to thwart these purposes in a number of ways, including inadequate accountability, inappropriate use of resources, unconstrained exercise of merely private judgement or inappropriate self-interest.

2. *Medical professionalism and ethics*

The activity or relationship should be consistent with medical professionalism and with CMA's *Code of Ethics*.

- The CMA is an association of physicians.
- When the CMA acts, it represents the medical profession.
- The CMA's actions reflect upon the medical profession.
- The CMA's stature and reputation are inextricably linked to the medical profession's

work, the professional stature of its member physicians and the trust Canadians place in their physicians.

- Engaging in activities or relationships that are inconsistent with medical professionalism and CMA's *Code of Ethics* would erode trust in the CMA.

3. *Independence*

The activity or relationship should not undermine the CMA's independence.

- To be a credible voice and influence and to be worthy of the trust and confidence of physicians and of the public, the CMA should be, and be seen to be, free of undue influence and in control of the decisions it makes.
- Undue influence occurs when one is induced to do or not do something that is contrary to what one would otherwise do if left to act freely. Undue influence deprives one of free agency and destroys free will such that it is rendered more the will of another than of one's own.
- Activities and relationships that may undermine independence include:
 - activities or relationships that provide revenue or benefit to the CMA such that ongoing dependency on the revenue or benefit impedes independence
 - activities and relationships that create a product or service that is seen to be associated with the CMA but over which the CMA does not have final control or veto or the capacity to extricate itself

4. *Consistency with policy*

The activity or relationship should be consistent with CMA policy.

- The CMA develops policy in pursuance of its

purposes; these should be referred to when making decisions in connection with activities or relationships.

5. Conflicting goals and activities

Relationships with parties whose goals or activities directly conflict with the CMA's objects, mission or vision should be avoided.

- This does not preclude discussion with others or participation in events for the purposes of obtaining information, monitoring or lobbying.

6. Transparency

The terms and conditions of the activity or relationship should be transparent.

- Transparency promotes an openness to scrutiny and serves to enhance accountability and to discourage relationships or activities that could be considered problematic.
- The principle is generally applicable except in connection to matters related to competitive advantage, trade secret or a reasonable agreement of confidentiality.

7. Compliance and accountability

Processes must be in place to ensure that proposed and ongoing activities or relationships are appropriately reviewed for compliance with and clear accountability for these principles.