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Policy on Content Validation for CME Activities

Effective Date: May 27, 2012
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POLICY:
It is the responsibility of the primary Course Director in collaboration with Harvard Medical School's Global and Continuing Education (GCE) to validate all clinical content for HMS accredited continuing medical education (CME) activities. To ensure that the content of HMS's CME activities is free from the control of commercial interests and is balanced, objective and scientifically rigorous, the following requirements are in place:

A. Each activity must conform to the ACCME's definition of CME:

> Continuing medical education consists of educational activities which serve to maintain, develop, or increase the knowledge, skills, and professional performance and relationships that a physician uses to provide services for patients, the public, or the profession. The content of CME is that body of knowledge and skills generally recognized and accepted by the profession as within the basic medical sciences, the discipline of clinical medicine, and the provision of health care to the public.
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> The ACCME notes that a broad definition of CME, such as the one found above, recognizes that all continuing educational activities which assist physicians in carrying out their professional responsibilities more effectively and efficiently are CME. A course in management would be appropriate CME for physicians responsible for managing a health care facility; a course in educational methodology would be appropriate CME for physicians teaching in a medical school; a course in practice management would be appropriate CME for practitioners interested in providing better service to patients.

B. Each activity must be developed free from the control of commercial interests (see *HMS Policy on Identification and Resolution of Conflicts of Interest for Continuing Medical Education Activities* for the definition of commercial interests). Specifically, the following decisions must be made independent of such interests:

1. Identification of CME needs
2. Determination of educational objectives
3. Selection and presentation of content
4. Selection of all persons and organizations that will be in a position to control the content of the CME
5. Selection of educational methods
6. Evaluation of the activity

C. A commercial interest may never take the role of non-accredited partner in a joint providership relationship.

D. The content or format of each activity or its related materials must promote improvements or quality in healthcare and not a specific proprietary business interest of a commercial interest and be based on best available evidence.

E. The content for all presentations or written materials must provide a balanced view of therapeutic options. Use of generic names will contribute to this impartiality. If the CME educational material or content includes trade names, where available trade names from several companies should be used, not just trade names from a single company.

F. All recommendations involving clinical medicine in HMS CME activities must be based on evidence that is accepted within the profession of medicine as adequate justification for their indications and contraindications in the care of patients.

G. All scientific research referred to, reported or used in HMS CME activities in support or justification of a patient care recommendation must conform to the generally accepted standards of experimental design, data collection and analysis.

H. CME activities that promote recommendations, treatment or manners of practicing medicine that are known to have risks or dangers that outweigh the benefits or known to be ineffective in the treatment of patients are not permitted to be offered through HMS.

I. Faculty members are required to disclose to learners when products or procedures being discussed are off-label, unlabeled, experimental, and/or investigational (not FDA approved), and any limitations on the information that is presented, such as data that are preliminary or that represent ongoing research, interim analyses, and/or unsupported opinion.