



CONSEIL QUÉBÉCOIS
DE DÉVELOPPEMENT
PROFESSIONNEL CONTINU
DES MÉDECINS

CODE OF ETHICS

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PROFESSIONNEL CONTINU DES MÉDECINS

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IMPLEMENTATION

The Code will be fully effective on January 1st, 2016.

INTRODUCTION

The explosion of scientific knowledge, professional and institutional changes, technological developments, the need for good relational skills and the requirements of a physician's various roles (communicator, partner, healthcare promoter, etc.), whether in teaching, research and management, has sparked the need to organize, for groups and individuals, numerous Continuing Professional Development (CPD) activities. CPD is an essential component of professional medical practice because it contributes to the development and maintenance of a physician's skills and his ability to offer the best possible services.

For many years, universities, professional corporations, hospital centers, governmental and paragonovernmental agencies, business corporations, including pharmaceutical companies, and many other stakeholders, have contributed to physicians' CPD by taking part, in various ways, in the organization of training activities. Educational activities offered in the context of CPD aim to enable participants to acquire, maintain and improve recognized skills, such as medical expertise, professionalism and cooperation, among others, so that patients, and the health system as a whole, can reap the expected benefits.

Organizations, whether non-profit or for-profit, also invest in the promotion of their products and services, and in the consultation of physicians. One should not confuse such promotional activities with the educational activities of physicians.

The Conseil québécois de développement professionnel continu des médecins (CQDPCM) has responsibilities with regard to the Continuing Professional Development of physicians (CPD). By common agreement, CQDPCM members acknowledge the fact that all CPD stakeholders must ensure that the educational activities that they organize, or are involved in, are primarily designed to help physicians acquire and master skills that will improve the quality of services provided to the population. Members also agree that such CPD activities must be planned, implemented and managed for the purpose of education, and not to promote a particular product or service.

In defining rules for cooperation between medical organizations and sponsoring or funding bodies, or organisations with a financial stake in CPD, the CQDPCM wishes to ensure the delivery of quality and ethical CPD activities.

The CQDPCM's *Code of Ethics* aims to ensure that neither the organizers, resource persons or participants of a training activity place themselves in a real or potential conflict of interest situation. The *Code of Ethics* also aims to avoid interference by a funding organization in the scientific content or messages of a professional training activity.

THE NEED TO STANDARDIZE ETHICAL RULES IN CONTINUING PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT

In May 1995, the CQDPCM published the *Guide d'éthique sur les relations entre les diverses organisations médicales et les sociétés commerciales relativement à l'éducation médicale continue* (Ethical guide to relations between medical organizations and business corporations concerning continuing medical education). Similarly, to clarify the rules governing cooperation between medical organizations and funding organizations, it prepared and adopted the *Code d'éthique du Conseil québécois de développement professionnel continu des médecins*, which is presented in this document.

Canadian research-based pharmaceutical companies (Rx&D) devotes a chapter to the rules on continuing Professional Development in its *Code of Ethical Practices*.

CONSEIL QUÉBÉCOIS DE DÉVELOPPEMENT PROFESSIONNEL CONTINU DES MÉDECINS (CQDPCM)

Following a suggestion of the Collège des médecins du Québec (CMQ), organizations interested in CPD created, in 1975, a collaborative body, the Conseil de l'éducation médicale continue du Québec. This Board changed its name in 2005 to become the CQDPCM. Through the years, this non-profit organization was able to establish a consensus on issues of interest related to CPD and has produced many publications.

The CQDPCM's mission is to promote and improve CPD in Quebec. Specifically, its mandate is:

- **with regard to CPD organizations**, to encourage discussion and cooperation, as well as promote consensus with a view of harmonizing the CPD of Quebec physicians;
- **with regard to CPD organizers**, to implement various educational activities for CPD trainers and organizers, especially those in medical faculties, professional organizations and healthcare institutions, and support their work;
- **with regard to participants**, to inform Quebec physicians of the activities offered by CQDPCM member organizations, as well the policies and agreements they have arrived at;
- **with regard to research**, to promote research in CPD, by providing leadership, especially by facilitating networking between interested parties and encouraging the transfer of research knowledge into medical practice.

The CQDPCM consists of the following organizations:

REGULAR MEMBERS:

- Canada's research-based pharmaceutical companies (Rx&D)*
- Collège des médecins du Québec
- Collège québécois des médecins de famille
- Federation of General Practitioners of Québec
- Federation of Medical Specialists of Québec
- Laval University
- McGill University
- Médecins francophones du Canada
- Montreal University
- Royal College of Physicians and Surgeons of Canada
- Sherbrooke University

ASSOCIATE MEMBER

- The Canadian Medical Protective Association

*Rx&D don't endorse this code of Ethics

DEFINITIONS

Interactions between physicians and funding organisations, including business corporations, can take several forms. They may include research activities, product and services promotions, consulting activities, as well as CPD activities. The ethical rules presented in this document provide guidance for CPD activities. The purpose of following definitions is to clarify the meaning of terms related to CPD and the role of various stakeholders.

CPD ACTIVITY

Any educational intervention on a given topic whose length and format may vary. The content of such activities must reflect the body of knowledge and skills that are accepted by the medical community as an integral part of medical or clinical science, and medical practice. Activities can be offered for individuals or groups.

GIFTS

Any item, sum of money, entertainment activity or financial or material incentive that is given to someone without something being asked in return. Are not included in this definition various items given out at conventions such as pencils, convention bags, document support media (CDs, DVDs, and USB thumb drives) and the equipment used by organizers to ensure the activity runs smoothly. Are considered gifts any item or material offered to participants, other than that which is used by the Organizing Committee to reach the CPD activity's training objectives.

ORGANIZING COMMITTEE

The committee that is responsible for planning, organizing and managing a CPD activity or program.

SCIENTIFIC COMMITTEE

An independant committee that is responsible for using a methodical approach to education in order to implement a CPD activity or program.

COMPETENCIES

Medical skills are defined as the set of characteristics that enable a physician to execute the various roles of medical expert and demonstrate qualities such as scholarship, communication, professionalism, cooperation, as well as health advocate and management.

According to his or her speciality, the physician will bring to the above-mentioned roles skills that will allow him or her to deliver high quality services and provide the benefits expected from these competencies to patients and the health system.

CONTRACT

An agreement in which one or more individuals makes a commitment to one or more other individuals to do or not do something. For instance, a medical organization could agree to provide space to a company for a booth during a CPD activity in exchange for a predetermined sum of money.

CONTINUING PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT OF PHYSICIANS

"Any step that is taken by a physician to acquire, maintain or improve his knowledge, skills or attitudes. Continuing Professional Development is an individual or group action taken in response to a need or an interest. It is part of a training cycle and aims to improve the quality of care provided to the population."¹

ORGANIZER

Any person or organization who is responsible for planning, implementing and managing a CPD activity or program, on behalf of a medical organization, with the help of a scientific committee and an organizing committee.

FOR-PROFIT ORGANIZATION

A for-profit corporation as defined in Quebec legislation.

1. The definition adopted by the CQDPCM in 2005.

MEDICAL ORGANIZATION OR ORGANIZATION OF HEALTHCARE PROFESSIONALS

A for-profit or non-profit organization that has more than one health care professional as a member. Are included in this category:

- Educational institutions;
- Medical clinics;
- Professional associations, scientific organizations and physician groups;
- Faculties of medicine;
- Other medical organizations at the provincial or national level.

NON-PROFIT ORGANIZATION

A non-profit corporation as defined by Quebec legislation.

ACCREDITING ORGANIZATION

Any association (e.g. a regional, provincial or national association, a faculty of medicine or educational institution) that grants CPD credits for activities it organizes itself or that receives applications for the granting of CPD credits for activities organized by other organizations.

ACCREDITED ORGANIZATION

Any organization that is accredited as a CPD provider (e.g., a university, a professional corporation, a scientific organization or other) by the CMQ's Committee of Medical Studies and Accreditation (CÉMA), or one of its Canadian counterparts.

FUNDING ORGANIZATION

A for-profit or non-profit organization that provides grants for the presentation of a CPD activity or program.

PARTICIPANT

Any individual, other than a resource person, who attends or takes part in a CPD activity or program in order to acquire, maintain or upgrade his or her skill. The term "participant" includes healthcare professionals, residents, students or individuals who are part of the target group.

RESOURCE PERSON

Any person who is involved in a CPD activity or program as an expert, lecturer, Scientific or Organizing Committee member, facilitator, moderator or administrative staff member (e.g., a coordinator, a person responsible for welcoming participants, etc.).

CPD PROGRAM

A set of CPD activities that targets a particular group. CPD programs cover all the competencies that are recognized by the medical profession.

ACTIVITY PROGRAM

A document that provides information on the organization responsible for the activity, the target audience, the content and format of presentations, the members of the Scientific and Organizing Committees, the resource persons, and, if need be, the organizations funding or sponsoring the activity. It also provides general information, on the activity date, location, schedule, etc.

EDUCATIONAL GRANTS

Donation, aid or support provided by a for-profit or non-profit organization to a medical organization so that it can implement a CPD activity or program. This aid, which is subject to a letter of understanding, can take various forms:

- A sum of money.
- Goods, such as:
 - Document photocopies.
- Services, such as:
 - Translation of the educational program.
 - Audiovisual services.

The cost of renting a booth for a CPD activity is not considered an educational grant, but rather a payment for a service rendered by the medical organization to a third party organization.

GUIDING PRINCIPLES

The guiding principles governing the various aspects of Continuing Professional Development (CPD) focus on the content and implementation of CPD activities and programs, and the stakeholders' objectives and independence. They apply to any CPD-related actions, whether direct or indirect.

GOAL OF CPD ACTIVITIES AND PROGRAMS

CPD activities and programs are an ideal way to disseminate new knowledge and to contribute to the maintenance of professional healthcare skills.

The main goal of CPD activities and programs must be to improve the participants' knowledge and ensure that they can deliver high quality healthcare services to their patients. They must also aim to improve their skills, as well as their understanding of advances made in the fields of research and medical science, as well as all aspects of medical practice.

COOPERATION

Continuing Professional Development is often faced with challenges when it comes to adapting to the evolving needs of the healthcare system. It is a recognized fact that, individually, none of the CPD stakeholders have all the skills, capabilities and resources needed to create and implement the CPD activities that will develop and maintain the skills of healthcare professionals.

In order to provide the best possible healthcare to patients, cooperation on matters related to CPD must be based on proper procedures and rules that ensure the delivery of balanced and fair CPD services and minimize the risk of conflicts of interest, bias or pressure being exerted by other sources or stakeholder groups.

TRANSPARENCY

Organizers must implement transparent accounting procedures that allow all stakeholders to be informed of revenue sources and expenditure allocation, which must be approved by the activity organizer.

PURPOSE OF CPD ORGANIZATIONS AND RESOURCE PERSONS

The purpose of CPD organizations and resource persons is to plan, implement and manage high quality and ethical CPD activities and programs.

RESPONSIBILITY FOR ORGANIZING A CPD ACTIVITY OR PROGRAM

The Scientific Committee and the Organizing Committee are responsible for organizing CPD activities or programs.

- **Scientific Committee:** An independent body, the Scientific Committee ensures compliance with the Methodical Approach to Education and determines the content, resource persons and teaching method that will be used, while maintaining interaction with the Organizing Committee and respecting its right to ask questions. In carrying out its mandate, the Scientific Committee may consult, on an ad hoc basis, any person it deems necessary, including members of funding organizations. Finally, the Scientific Committee maintains its status as a fully independent body.
- **Organizing Committee:** The Organizing Committee is responsible for planning, organizing and managing CPD activities and programs. It interacts with the Scientific Committee and is entitled to ask questions and offer suggestions, but it does not have a say on decisions relating to content or resource persons.

STRUCTURED APPROACH TO EDUCATION

All educational interventions must comply with the structured approach to education. In other words:

- The target audience must clearly be defined in the program and the method used to consult it must be described. In addition, a representative of the target audience must be involved in the design and development of the content and in the implementation of the activity.
- A needs analysis must be carried out in order to satisfy the previously documented educational needs (perceived, proven, institutional or prescriptive) of the target audience.
- Specific learning objectives must be defined based on previously identified needs. These objectives must be mentioned in the activity's program.
- Activities must promote interaction. In other words, the target audience must actively take part in its own training.
- The educational methods used and described in the program must enable participants to achieve training objectives.
- An evaluation of the CPD activity or program must be made by organizers and participant.

A CPD activity must also satisfy the following criteria:

- The organization of the activity must comply with the *Code of Ethics of the Conseil québécois de développement professionnel continu des médecins*;
- Sources of funding must be clearly identified;
- Related activities, whether social or other, must not overshadow the educational activity, nor interfere with it.

All processes and elements related to the structured approach to CPD are under the direct control of the Scientific Committee.

The processes and elements subject to this rule are:

- Creating a scientific committee that includes representatives of the target audience;
- Defining the target audience;
- Carrying out a needs analysis;
- Formulating the learning objectives;
- Choosing the program, the activities, the subject matters and the general themes;
- Defining the content;
- Choosing the lecturers and other resource persons;
- Choosing the educational methods, including the tools provided to participants before, during and after the activity;
- Evaluating the activity.

The needs analyses carried out by various sources (the funding organization, for example) must be carefully reviewed by the Scientific Committee who may accept or reject them.

Though it is recommended that the Scientific Committee propose learning objectives to the lecturers and resource persons, and not the other way around, it can be useful to gain their cooperation in order to enhance such objectives, especially if they find that certain prescriptive, perceived or proven needs are not covered in the initial objectives.

In addition to being responsible for preparing an evaluation form and ensuring that it is filled out by the participants, the Scientific Committee must provide a summary of the activity's results once it is completed. It is also suggested that the resource persons be asked to assess the activity and its organization.

POTENTIAL BIAS

All organizations may have a bias because of their mission, goals, members or interests.

- With the growing involvement of for-profit corporations in CPD, the following organizations should be included in this category:
- Business corporations (e.g., medical equipment providers, communication agencies, event planning companies, etc.), including pharmaceutical companies (members and non-members of Rx&D);
- Certain medical and paramedical for-profit organizations (e.g., laboratories, clinics, etc.).
- Non-profit organizations may also exert undue influence or interfere with an activity, and this must be taken into account. The following organizations should be included in this category:
 - Governments, as well as their departments and agencies;
 - Foundations;
 - Scientific societies;
 - Patient associations and interest groups.

Having a bias is not necessarily bad. For example, an organization may have a bias toward the ethical practice of medicine, promoting safe healthcare or improving a medical specialty.

Some biases may be tolerated, but others, such as a commercial bias, have no place in Continuing Professional Development. A commercial bias presents information that is not well-balanced and that may be misleading.

The organizer of a CPD activity must be aware of biases, both positive and negative, that resource persons, medical organizations and funding organizations that are involved in a CPD activity may have. He or she must also ensure that the CPD activity is well-balanced and not unduly influenced by these biases and is free from any inappropriate preferences.

An activity funded by a single funding organization may create the appearance of a conflict of interest. Organizers are therefore strongly encouraged to obtain grants from multiple sources.

ACTIVITY CONTENT

The content of CPD activities and programs must be objective, balanced and designed in such a way that it allows various recognized assumptions and opinions to be presented. It must include scientific and other information that can contribute to the improvement of the participants' professional practices.

Choosing the program content, the resource persons and the educational material provided at a CPD activity is the sole responsibility of the Scientific Committee or of the medical organization in charge of the activity.

CONTENT REVIEW

The Scientific Committee should, if at all possible, review in advance the content material of an educational activity to ensure that it is free of negative biases, including commercial biases.

Both the Scientific Committee and the hired resource persons are responsible for ensuring that the activity's content is balanced or, in other words, unbiased and nuanced. The relationship between the two groups should be based on trust and resource persons should have some freedom with regard to the choice of content. However, this freedom should be given only if the chosen content is based on conclusive data. If the Scientific Committee becomes aware of a resource person's failure to comply with this obligation, it must talk with that person about the situation and take the necessary corrective steps.

USING THE GENERIC NAME OF A DRUG

To avoid any commercial bias, the generic name of a drug should preferably be used in all scientific communication. That said, as commercial names are generally easier to remember and sometimes shorter, they cannot be entirely excluded from presentations. Therefore, if the commercial name of a drug is used, it should always be accompanied by the generic name.

COPYRIGHT AND REFERENCES

Resource persons should provide participants with a list of reference works to help them further their training. However, the use of published material (text, tables, figures, results, etc.) must comply with the laws and regulations pertaining to copyright and intellectual property rights.

It is recommended that all resource persons be informed of such requirements when given their mandate by the Scientific Committee.

INDEPENDENCE OF RESOURCE PERSONS

Resource persons should not include in the planning, implementation and management of a CPD activity or program any item that could threaten their independence or raise conflict of interest issues. Their fees must be paid by the CPD activity organizer.

Before accepting to take part in a CPD activity or program, it is recommended that resource persons review the organizer's conflict of interest policy and comply with it. They must also clearly tell the organizer and participants about their memberships and sponsorships, the financial support they get, and any ties that they may have to the activity or program's content or that may impact on its objectivity. For example, a real or potential conflict of interest can be a relationship with the funding organization (whether it is a for-profit or non-profit organization).

Resource persons must also present scientific information that is balanced and objective, show the advantages and limitations of such information, expose differences of opinion, if any, that exist in the scientific community about the information and avoid promoting any particular product or service. Finally, they must abstain from taking part in any activity that, under the guise of being a CPD activity, promotes a product or service.

Third parties cannot offer any form of inducement, financial or other, to healthcare professionals in order to gain access or influence them.

DISCLOSURE OF POTENTIAL CONFLICTS OF INTEREST

It is crucial that hired resource persons, organizers and members of the Scientific Committee comply with the mandatory requirement for disclosure and reporting of any real or potential conflict of interest.

Healthcare professionals who have ties to funding organizations, including non-profit agencies (e.g., governments) must disclose them. Organizers and resource persons also have an obligation to disclose to participants, immediately at start of the CPD activity, any financial or organizational affiliation that they have.

The organizers must put in place a procedure to manage conflicts of interest. It is perfectly legitimate for an organization to accredit a training activity that is related to the participant's position and for which a financial compensation is given by the employer or the responsible organization. However, such compensation must not place the participant in a real or potential conflict of interest.

PARTICIPANTS' OBLIGATIONS

The participants of a CPD activity or program must exercise critical judgement when it comes to the presentations and educational material offered in said activity or program, particularly with regard to their content (are they objective and balanced?) and the discussion of assumptions and viewpoints which are presented. They must be on the lookout for potential biases and must report to the organizer any possible conflict of interest on the part of the funding organizations, or commercial bias on the part of the resource persons hired to present the activity or program.

ACTIVITY EVALUATION

With regard to possible conflicts of interest or commercial biases, the evaluation form used to assess a CPD activity or program should broach the following points:

- 1) The requirement for compliance with the *Code of Ethics of the Conseil québécois de développement professionnel continu des médecins*. A link to the Code must be provided so that participants can access and read it.
- 2) The obligation for the resource person to disclose any real or potential conflict of interest he or she may have before the start of the presentation.
- 3) Indications (or not) of a commercial bias during the activity.

PROMOTIONAL INFORMATION

The information provided in any promotional material on an educational activity must be accurate, objective and unequivocal. The elements used (colours, design, shape, logo, slides, etc.) should not bring to mind a particular commercial product or service, or be associated with ad placement (ad tagging).

AD PLACEMENT

Ad placement (tagging) is prohibited in all CPD activities. No advertising can be placed for a commercial organization associated to a topic, a lecturer or the educational material distributed to the participants.

However, it is acceptable, at group activities, to appropriately acknowledge the funding organizations. That said, a clear distinction must be made between placing an ad and offering acknowledgements. Ad placement is usually visible in the title of an activity and is an integral part of that activity. For example, the title might say: "The tutoring program of corporation X", rather than "The tutoring program of Association of Physicians Y". For their part, acknowledgements usually appear at the end of the program to avoid giving the impression that the sponsors organized the activity or program, or were involved in its implementation or in developing its content. Identifying a CPD activity for individuals or groups, or a part of it, with a funding organization is prohibited (e. g., a breakfast provided by corporation X).

MEALS

A meal that is included in a training activity is part of that activity and may be offered to participants or incorporated into the registration fees, if need be. However, meals which are social events (e.g., the President's banquet) must be paid for by the participants. For example, it is not acceptable to serve a gastronomic meal during the presentation ceremony. However, serving a sensible meal at lunch during a CPD activity or serving a meal before or after a training activity is fine, as long as the meal does not take precedence over the training activity.

SOCIAL ACTIVITIES

Social activities, related to sports or other pursuits, that accompany CPD activities or programs may serve to enhance learning by fostering informal discussions between participants and resource persons on the educational activity itself or on common professional interests. However, when both social and educational activities are offered in the same event, this event will be entitled to carry the CPD label only if its educational activities take precedence over the social ones. Moreover, the relative cost of social activities (with the exception of meals included in the educational activity) must be entirely paid for by the participants. In addition, the cost of such social activities must be reasonable.

It is up to the Organizing Committee, who is responsible for planning, implementing and managing a CPD activity or program, to decide if it is appropriate to include social activities and, if so, to determine the nature of such activities.

VERIFYING COMPLIANCE

Even if the accrediting body has not systematically attended every one of the activities that it has accredited, it is nevertheless responsible for ensuring the compliance of these activities with this *Code of Ethics*. Therefore, it is suggested that accrediting organizations or their delegates, when compliance with the *Code of Ethics of the Conseil québécois de développement professionnel continu des médecins* is in doubt, ensure that the activity is compliant by conducting, for example, random unannounced visits or by any other means.

DRAWS, PRIZES AND OTHER INCENTIVES

As part of a CPD activity, the organizer is allowed to organize a draw. The prize must be an acceptable educational tool which is awarded for the primary purpose of helping a healthcare professional and his patients, and not to provide anyone with a personal advantage.

As for other types of incentive, one must make a distinction between commercial incentives (e.g., passports that are given out to increase traffic at a trade show) and those that aim to make the educational process better (e.g., filling out a survey to define needs or evaluate an activity). The first type of incentive is to be prohibited. The second type, however, is not considered a gift, but rather a form of compensation for time spent completing the survey. Providing such compensation is up to the organizer. Whether it is awarded on an individual or group-basis (draws), it must be sensible and have an educational purpose.

All educational, clinical or organizational tools given to participants should include the following information so that they can assess the possibility of such tools hiding a potential bias.

- Name and affiliations of authors;
- Disclosure of authors' potential conflicts of interest;
- Names of sponsors (funding);
- Date;
- Mention of the fact that the tool has been reviewed (or not) by an independent committee of peers.

CODE OF ETHICS OF PHYSICIANS

The following sections of the *Code of Ethics of Physicians* apply to physicians taking part in a CPD activity or program:

• Section 63

A physician must safeguard his professional independence at all times and avoid any situation in which he would be in conflict of interest, in particular when the interests in question are such that he might tend to favour certain of them over those of his patient or where his integrity and loyalty toward the latter might be affected.

• Section 80

A physician may not be party to any agreement or accept any benefit that could jeopardize his professional independence, particularly in the context of continuing medical education activities.

• Section 81

A physician who organizes a continuing medical education activity or acts as a resource person in the context of such an activity must inform the participants of his affiliations or financial interests in a commercial enterprise in the performance of this activity.

FINANCIAL CONSIDERATIONS

FINANCIAL ASSISTANCE IN THE FORM OF BURSARIES AND POSTDOCTORAL FELLOWSHIPS

Financial assistance may be provided to students, residents, clinical fellows and physicians to enable them to complete their academic training, as long as the candidates for this assistance are chosen by the educational institution in which they are registered. In such cases, the bursary must be given to the school or institution, and not directly to the recipient, by the funding organization and, to the extent possible, through an academic fund set up for this purpose.

ACADEMIC GRANTS TO SUPPORT EDUCATIONAL ACTIVITIES

Financial assistance may be provided to students, residents, clinical fellows and physicians to allow them to take part in educational activities, such as CPD conventions and seminars, as long as the candidates for this assistance are chosen by the educational institution in which they are registered. In such cases, the grant must be given to the school or institution, and not directly to the recipient, by the funding organization and, to the extent possible, through an academic fund set up for this purpose.

FUNDING

The organizers of CPD activities are responsible for the funding arrangements of these activities. Such arrangements must comply with the following:

- All contributions, including those from a commercial source, must be made in the form of an educational grant payable to the institution or health professional organization which is responsible for the activity.
- Resource persons must not accept any compensation from the funding organization.

Agreements for the provision of goods, services or money between the organizers of a CPD activity or program and a third party should be in writing.

DISCLOSURE OF FINANCIAL CONTRIBUTIONS

In the interest of transparency, the financial contribution of all for-profit and non-profit organizations must be mentioned on the activity program and on all other related material (except badges) in the following manner:

- “This program has received an educational grant from (names of funding organizations)”;
- Corporate sponsors must be listed together in one place and at the same time in the activity material and without a logo. Name of sponsors must all be the same size and displayed in the same font;
- Only company names must be mentioned;
- Acknowledgements must not be associated to any one specific part of the activity.

RESOURCE PERSONS

Compensation in the form of a grant or a fee may be given to the resource persons of a CPD activity or program. This compensation will be paid by the organization responsible for the CPD activity and not by the funding organization. It must not be given to other individuals such as a spouse or family member of a resource person, nor to participants of an activity or their spouse or family members.

Reimbursement for travel and accommodation expenses incurred by a resource person will be made according to the travel expense reimbursement policies that the organization responsible for the training activity has established for its own employees and members.

PARTICIPANTS

Activity participants cannot receive a financial compensation for their participation, except in the following situations:

- The physician who is an employee, delegate or authorized representative of an organization, or who is part of a negotiated agreement between the Ministry of Health and Social Services and the medical federations, may receive a stipend, in any form, for his or her participation in CPD activities and be reimbursed for his or her travel and accommodation expenses.

A person accompanying a participant to a meal offered as part of a CPD activity must pay the total cost of the meal.

SPECIAL CIRCUMSTANCES

PROMOTIONAL ACTIVITIES

Activities that do not comply with the guidelines and the methodical approach to CPD, which are described in this *Code of Ethics*, cannot be considered CPD activities nor should they appear in the program of a CPD event. A promotional activity organized by a funding organization, and which people associate to this organization, cannot be recognized as a CPD activity.

Promotional activities cannot take place at the same time, nor in the same facilities, as a CPD activity. However, they can take place in a defined commercial space, under the responsibility of the organizer.

ADVISORY COMMITTEE OF A FOR-PROFIT ORGANIZATION

The consulting services provided by healthcare professionals to for-profit corporations are not intended for the training of healthcare consultants and therefore are not to be considered a CPD activity.²

TRAIN THE TRAINER IN CPD

Training involves an educational activity that will prepare future educators for a role in CPD. Such training must follow the Structural Approach to Education in providing CPD. This means that the rules governing a CPD activity also apply to CPD train the trainer. CPD train the trainer aims to develop a resource person's ability to plan, implement and assess an educational approach or a training plan.

Educator training may focus on the development of the skills required for a specific educational method and can be associated to a particular preestablished content. It must also acknowledge the professional independence of participants and present content which is based on scientific material and is objective and free from any commercial bias.

2. "Le professionnel de la santé en tant que consultant pour une société pharmaceutique", *L'Organisateur d'EMC*, vol. 15, issue n° 2 – December 2003.

COMPLAINTS AND VIOLATIONS

In approving the *Code of Ethics*, the members of the Conseil québécois de développement professionnel continu des médecins undertake not only to personally comply with its various conditions, but to also ensure compliance by others. For example, any person taking part in a CPD activity or program who believes that the CQDPCM's *Code of Ethics* has not been followed may lodge a complaint, as can also any person who is made aware of a known or suspected violation to one of the Code's provisions.

COLLÈGE DES MÉDECINS DU QUÉBEC

The Collège des médecins du Québec (CMQ) is a professional corporation, founded in 1847, which periodically accredits organizations that offer CPD activities and programs in Quebec. Accreditations are granted by the CMQ's Committee of Medical Studies and Accreditation. One of the accreditation criteria requires the acceptance of a code of ethics that defines the relations between organizations and business corporations with regard to CPD, as well as compliance with said code.

The CMQ's Continuing Professional Development Committee also has certain CPD responsibilities. Its mandate is to:

- Make physicians accountable with regard to their obligation to keep their skills up to date;
- Carry out an inventory of CPD resources;
- Develop strategies to maintain the skills of physicians;
- Promote cooperation between organizations that are responsible for CPD.

COMPLAINTS REGARDING A MEDICAL ORGANIZATION

LODGING AND PROCESSING COMPLAINTS

Any complaint about a violation of the *Code of Ethics of the Conseil québécois de développement professionnel continu des médecins* that concerns a medical organization should be submitted in writing to the CMQ's Continuing Professional Development Committee. The Committee will study the complaint and ask the medical organization in question to submit its written observations within 30 days. The Committee will then notify in writing all involved parties of its decision, as quickly as possible, after submission of the complaint.

- Continuing Professional Development
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PENALTIES

Medical organizations and their affiliate organizations that subscribe to the CQDPCM's *Code of Ethics* and that have been found in violation of one of its provisions will be subject to one of penalties prescribed in the Code.

FIRST OFFENCE

A warning letter is sent to the medical organization found guilty of a violation and mention of the offence is published in the newsletter *La Lettre du DPC*.

SECOND OFFENCE

(IN THE SAME 12 MONTH PERIOD)

A reprimand is sent to the medical organization found guilty of a violation and mention of the offence is published in the newsletter *La Lettre du DPC* and *the Le Collège Volume*.

THIRD OFFENCE (IN THE SAME 12 MONTH PERIOD)

A second reprimand is sent to the medical organization found guilty of a violation of the *Code of Ethics*. A recommendation is also sent to the CMQ's Committee of Medical Studies and Accreditation asking that it assess the possibility of revoking the organization's accreditation. Finally, mention of the offence is published in the newsletter *La Lettre du DPC* and the *Le College*.

In all cases, the medical organization found to be in violation will pay the cost of publishing the offences in the newsletter *La Lettre du DPC* and the *Le College*.

APPEALS AND ARBITRATION

If one of the parties involved disagrees with the decision of the CMQ's Continuing Professional Development Committee, or if this Committee is unable to make a ruling, a request for arbitration may be submitted.

In such instances, an arbitration board is formed. This board consist of a representative of each of the parties involved, a representative of the CMQ's Continuing Professional Development Committee and a chair selected by the parties or, failing that, who is appointed by the chair of the CMQ's CPD Committee.

The request for arbitration must be submitted in writing to the CMQ's CPD Committee within 30 calendar days following receipt of the Committee's ruling. The Arbitration Board's decision is final and must be respected.

The parties involved are responsible for the expenses they incur during arbitration. The party whose appeal is rejected will pay expenses resulting from the appointment and participation of the Arbitration Board's chair.

Except in the event of an appeal for arbitration within the above-mentioned time frames, the decision of the CMQ's CPD Committee is considered binding and must be respected.

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