

Annotated guidelines on gifts to physicians from industry. American Medical Association Council on Ethical and Judicial Affairs.

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We have responded on an individual basis to many requests for interpretations of grey areas in the opinion on gifts from industry since its release in December 1990, and many physicians and companies asked for a detailed list of these interpretations. While the council agrees with the concerns several individuals have expressed about additional rules, it authorized this revised list of questions and answers which replaces the earlier draft. It also established three main principles for future implementation: 1. The key principles of the guidelines should be carefully observed by physicians, and the AMA will remain active in attempting to secure compliance by its members. The overriding rule is that individual physicians should not accept substantial gifts from industry, even if the gift has an educational or patient benefit. It is important that the profession set clear and enforceable standards in this regard. 2. Professional associations should make their own interpretations of the appropriateness of gifts to them from industry. Under appropriate conditions, associations of physicians may, of course, receive gifts from industry. 3. Neither the council nor its staff will attempt to regulate minor issues or minute details of compliance. For many situations there are no yes or no answers. Some black letter rules are necessary so that conduct that should be changed is changed. In addition, they aid companies which want to comply with the spirit as well as the letter of the guidelines without putting themselves at a competitive disadvantage. The six points of the Opinion cover most situations and compliance to date has been good.(ABSTRACT TRUNCATED AT 250 WORDS)