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Mr Graeme Samuel AO
Chairman
Australian Competition and Consumer Commission
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Dear Mr Samuel

I refer to recent ACCC correspondence with Medicines Australia, available from the ACCC website, indicating its intention to amend the wording of condition C1 to require member companies to provide Medicines Australia with a greater level of information on the educational events they have sponsored on a per company basis.

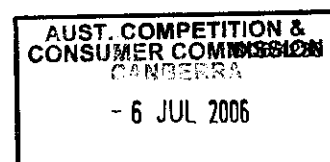
The AMA has continually advocated and has demonstrated strong support for a transparent relationship between the medical profession and the pharmaceutical industry through the Medicines Australia Code of Conduct, as well as through the AMA's own Code of Ethics (2004) and a specific Position Statement on the Doctor - Pharmaceutical Company Relationship (2002).

It is therefore of concern to the AMA that the ACCC appears intent on treating the relationship between doctors and pharmaceutical companies differently to all other professions and industries, to request an unsupported level of transparency surrounding that relationship, and to demonstrate an unreasonable level of distrust about the relationship between pharmaceutical companies and doctors.

Previous proposals from the ACCC were to publish the names of doctors attending educational functions on a website in advance. This latest proposal is only marginally less intrusive and we fundamentally oppose it. The AMA is concerned that the level of detail of reporting that is required in this condition is unjustified in relation to the demonstrated public benefit, and that it is likely to deter pharmaceutical companies from providing educational services, and may also discourage doctors from attending them.

The real purpose of these meetings is to provide information to medical professionals on new developments in medicines that will improve patient care and health outcomes. Doctors mostly attend meetings in their own time after a full practice day. Given the focus of proposed reporting is more on individual companies and the dollars spent than on education and outcomes, the AMA believes that the proposed condition will leave both the medical profession and pharmaceutical industry open to negative media and public comment.

A recent survey by the AMA indicates that doctors prescribing habits are not influenced by pharmaceutical company pressure. Eighty per cent of GPs surveyed ticked the "not for substitution" box between 0-25% of the time. The full report of this survey is available from the AMA website at <http://www.ama.com.au/web.nsf/doc/WEEN-6PX27T>.



The AMA finds this latest attempt by the ACCC to control the profession under the guide of transparency unfounded and unnecessary and urges you to reconsider the need for this condition.

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "John Gullotta". The signature is fluid and cursive, with a large loop at the beginning and a long, sweeping tail.

A/Prof John Gullotta
Chair
AMA Therapeutics Committee

3 July 2006

jg:sc