

Dr Richard Chadwick
Australian Competition & Consumer Commission
GPO Box 3131
Canberra
ACT 2601

Dear Dr Chadwick

Pre-decision conference – Medicines Australia Code – 17 November 2009

I am a cancer patient with no medical training and no affiliations with the industry. I have an interest in non-prescription drugs, primarily complementary medicines, and I believe my experience in fighting for consumer protection in relation to these products will enable me to contribute, from a consumer's perspective, to the video-conference meeting. I will be in Canberra on the 17 November.

During 2008 I was part of the consortium selected by the National Prescribing Service to provide Complementary Resources that consumers could use "with confidence" when making choices with self-medication and more recently, 26 October 2009, I was invited by the TGA to review the new guidelines for listed products with weight loss indications.

Issues of concern to me include:

- More transparency in the relationship between health practitioners and the industry. Whether it is something as simple as free pens or drug-company sponsored so-called educational dinners, such contacts influence practitioners in their attitudes to medicines and choices of products and services.
- The limited sanctions placed on the industry when they repeatedly offend which does not discourage misinformation such as inappropriate or exaggerated claims for their products.
- The lack of disclosures of activities that may bring about conflicts of interest, which may include payments such as consulting fees or funding.

The choices made by health practitioners for the treatments recommended for their patients should be based on best practices and should not be influenced either overtly or covertly by the industry.

Yours sincerely

Loretta Marron