

Policy on Relationships with Corporate Partners

Approved by the Action Hepatitis Steering Committee: June 30, 2014

Preamble

This policy is intended to formalize the process and conditions under which Action Hepatitis Canada (AHC) will collaborate with Corporate Partners.

Context

- It is imperative that AHC maintains the trust of our members, health care providers, the public and governments. Therefore, AHC must maintain its credibility and independence, and avoid conflicts of interest and the appearance of undue influence.
- AHC has an objective of attracting Corporate Partners, including companies in the pharmaceutical industry, to support our mission, goals and objectives.

General Principles

AHC will...

- never compromise its independence;
- be transparent as to our roles;
- be open about our policy on relations with Corporate Partners and communicate it accordingly;
- make our policy available to those who might wish to see it;
- continue to publicly recognize our financial contributors;
- treat all companies fairly;
- take the leadership in setting the ground rules for contributions and sponsorships;
- maximize the donations from the pharmaceutical companies, within the spirit of this policy.

Corporate Guidelines

- 1) Companies providing drugs for the treatment of hepatitis B and C will be asked to provide unrestricted funding to AHC. All Corporate Partners will be asked to contribute unrestricted funds in an amount which takes into consideration:
 - a. the program needs of AHC;
 - b. the company's historical involvement with AHC;
 - c. the importance of the company in the Canadian market;
 - d. strategic opportunities.
- 2) AHC's Steering Committee will decide which research programs, general programs, events or publications will be made eligible for sponsorship.

- 3) AHC reserves the right to determine appropriate sponsors, the type of sponsorship and the length or duration of sponsorship.
- 4) AHC will seek to involve more than one company where feasible in each sponsorship request. Exclusivity in sponsorship will not be encouraged and will only be accepted with the approval of AHC's steering committee
- 5) All sponsorships will be by written agreement prior to implementation of the corporate relationship. Signed copies will be kept by both parties.
- 6) A document will be produced annually, circulated to funders, outlining the sponsorship opportunities, the visibility accorded to the sponsor and the dollar cost of the sponsorship. AHC will make every effort to take into account budgetary timelines. Opportunities which arise in the course of a year will be widely advertised to all companies.
- 7) Sponsorship will only be accepted when AHC retains full editorial and decision-making control of the program, event or the publication.
- 8) Recognition in AHC research programs, general programs, events or publications will be given to companies and not products manufactured by these companies.
- 9) The promotion of specific Corporate Partner products is acceptable only in defined circumstances, such as clearly-marked company kiosks at AHC information meetings or presentations within medical symposia. When such events occur, all pharmaceutical companies in the particular Canadian market must be invited. Information distributed must be approved under the provisions of the Pharmaceutical Advertising Advisory Board, the RX & D Code or other appropriate industry standards, and the Health Protection Act.
- 10) In the written acknowledgments recognizing the sponsor(s) and/or written agreements, it will be specified that AHC's research program, general program, event or publication was made possible by an unrestricted grant from the sponsoring companies. It will also be stated that the acceptance of any sponsorship grant does not in any way mean endorsement of any one company or its product.
- 11) Corporate Partners will be acknowledged in the following modalities:
 - a. In publications, on the inside cover or other suitable place. The exact wording may vary but should be broadly similar to:

“This publication was made possible in part by unrestricted educational grants from [company names]”; Corporate Partner's logos will not be allowed;
 - b. On the AHC website. A corporate logo may be used but no hyperlink to the Corporate Partner's website will be allowed;
 - c. At the AHC Annual General Meeting. A corporate logo will be displayed on a PowerPoint slide and/or on a delegate kit insert.
- 12) AHC will not accept advertising of drugs in its publications. Brand names of drugs may be included in publications for information purposes. When this occurs, a disclaimer similar to the

following will be included:

“Brand names of treatment products are provided for information only. Their inclusion is not an endorsement of a particular product or company”.

- 13) AHC will not accept to reproduce in its publications any article produced by a Corporate Partner.
- 14) AHC medical symposia and consumer workshops may also be sponsored. All corporate philanthropy sponsors will be invited. Companies would be allowed to put up information kiosks to provide information approved under the provisions of the Pharmaceutical Advertising Advisory Board, the RX & D Code or other appropriate industry standards, and the Health Protection Act.
- 15) In its dealings with the pharmaceutical industry, AHC will carefully evaluate the pertinence of participating in an event organized by one company, for example, a company-sponsored workshop. We will ensure that we do not do something with one that we would not do with others. Before considering participation, the AHC must ensure that all three of the following criteria are met:
 - a. the company event is educational or social in nature and not focused on selling a product;
 - b. participation would enhance our ability to pursue our mission;
 - c. participation would not create confusion about the respective roles of AHC or its volunteers or staff and the company.
- 16) Any use of AHC’s name, logo or other identifying marks by Corporate Sponsors in promotional or educational materials must have the advance express written consent of AHC’s Steering Committee. Any use granted should be specific as to duration and/or publication.
- 17) In the event that a representative of a Corporate Sponsor is involved in an AHC event as a volunteer, his/her professional affiliation must be transparent.

Guidelines That Apply to Individuals Functioning as an AHC Representative

- 1) Requests or opportunities for sponsorship received by AHC volunteers* and/or staff should be channeled through the Coordinator, Resource Development. No individual volunteer or staff should enter into an agreement or make promises of recognition without appropriate approvals.
- 2) AHC volunteers and staff may on different occasions have business meetings with Corporate Partners at an appropriate level. It is acceptable to accept lunch and dinner invitations to conduct such business. Volunteers and staff should not, unless their participation is clearly necessary to represent AHC in the professional conduct of their work, accept invitations or tickets for sports or entertainment events, or other privileges. Gifts cannot be accepted. Exceptions to this rule are invitations or tickets for sports or entertainment events which are donated to the appropriate level of AHC and redistributed to volunteers, members and staff.

- 3) Volunteers and staff should keep in mind that information about AHC policies, programs, publications, etc. should not be restricted to one Corporate Partner, but should be available to all. General information about AHC policies, programs and activities should be imparted in such a way as not to confer commercial advantage to any one Corporate Partner or Corporate Partners.
- 4) AHC volunteers and staff may on occasion be invited to participate in company-sponsored activities. On these occasions, it must be clear that the volunteer or staff person is representing AHC. No personal honorarium is allowed. If an honorarium is offered, it should be paid to AHC.
- 5) AHC volunteers and staff should not accept a speaking engagement at a promotional event such as a product launch. No volunteer or staff member should endorse any one product in preference to others. AHC staff or volunteers may not participate in a company-sponsored event that could reasonably be interpreted as an endorsement of that company or its products. Members of the AHC Steering Committee or Executive, because they are perceived as spokespeople for the AHC, should adhere to even stricter guidelines. If there is any possibility that an official appearance or participation could be construed as an endorsement that could be used for commercial advantage by the inviting company, it should be refused.
- 6) Other members of the hepatitis community, if asked to speak at a company-sponsored event, should be encouraged to clearly disclose any source of funds, whether for traveling expenses or in the form of an honorarium.
- 7) AHC volunteers and staff should not accept individual sponsorships from Corporate Sponsors to attend meetings, conferences or congresses. AHC should endeavour to solicit general funding for the organization for such events from all Corporate Partners, and then determine itself those who will represent AHC.

* Volunteers are defined as members of AHC Boards of Directors or AHC committees.