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October 21, 2011

Dear Drs. Wilson and Douglas:

We are writing on behalf of the Membership of the CME Coalition, an association of companies who share a concern for the importance of preserving the vital role of continuing medical education in our health care system. We wish to express our strong support for ensuring that the AMA's external communications related to CME accurately reflect the policies and positions taken in the CEJA Report on the subject, as passed by the House of Delegates.

We note that recently, at the 22<sup>nd</sup> Annual Conference of the National Task Force on CME Provider/Industry Collaboration, an AMA staff presentation suggested an interpretation of the Report (CEJA 1-A-11) that was perceived by many in the audience as being inconsistent with its explicit language. For example, AMA staff stated that according to the Report, "independence from industry support" is a primary goal. The Report's actual language, however, contains no such suggestion that CME support by industry should be eliminated. In fact, the Report only indicates that CME providers must continue to evaluate when industry support is, or is not, appropriate.

As such, the CEJA report does not call for independence from industry support, but instead confirms ACCME principles and other CME guidelines that call on CME providers to transparently document their need for commercial support.

Furthermore, the CEJA report recognizes that there will be instances where reliance on an expert with financial interests in the educational subject matter will prove necessary to ensure access to high quality CME. The Report explicitly goes on to support the use of such experts with financial interests by reassuring physician-learners that they can rely on these experts' availability in the future because CME providers will make "vigorous efforts ... to maintain the independence and integrity of educational activities." (1-I-11, line 31-32). However, on this matter too, the presentation left many unanswered questions and perhaps implied a more restrictive position than the Report intended.

We worry that if AMA representatives are permitted to offer interpretations of the CEJA Report that deviate from its actual provisions, the AMA will be committing a disservice to audience members who wish to understand its true position on this issue of considerable complexity and controversy.

Rather than solely focusing on previous forums, however, we wish to reiterate our strong support for providing an honest and fulsome interpretation of the House of Delegates' resolution going forward. That resolution, and the Report it endorsed, clearly allow for the continuation of a sensible, balanced and rational relationship between CME providers and industry supporters.

Thank you very much for your attention to these concerns. We would greatly appreciate hearing from you at your earliest convenience regarding what actions your organization may make to address them.

Sincerely,

Chris Lamond  
Executive Director  
CME Coalition