

# **NEXt** *in Medical Education*

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## **What's NEXt in Medical Education?**

**D**ear Colleagues,

Welcome to the premier issue of *NEXt in Medical Education*, a new publication produced by Nexus Communications, Inc. as a service to our clients.

The current turbulent environment in continuing medical education (CME) has created anxieties for all stakeholders in the industry and left many providers and grantors struggling to develop best practices from vague guidelines. In *NEXt*, the Nexus team will share recent developments and offer expert recommendations for compliant practice, as well as updates on CME guidelines and best practices. We encourage you to send in your questions on CME or suggestions for future topics to [next@nexuscominc.com](mailto:next@nexuscominc.com).

*NEXt* will be published bi-monthly or more frequently, based on changes in the CME environment. I hope you find *NEXt* enjoyable and informative.

--Karen M. Overstreet, EdD, RPh, FACME, Editor

**About the Editor:** Karen M. Overstreet is President of Nexus Communications and active in many professional CME organizations including the Alliance for Continuing Medical Education, for which she serves on the Board of Directors and Executive Committee. She is a founding member, on the Board of Directors, and Past President of the North American Association of Medical Education and Communication Companies, as well as a site surveyor for the Accreditation Council for Continuing Medical Education, and a frequent presenter at national CME symposia and workshops.

## **Controversy over new Standards for Commercial Support**

**A**s the dust begins to settle regarding the revised Accreditation Council for CME (ACCME) Standards for Commercial Support of CME, providers and grantors alike are hoping to have more flexibility in interpreting the guidelines than we originally thought when they were adopted in late September. Based on new information provided by ACCME (see the press release of October 19, 2004) and a teleconference held with its Executive Director, Murray Kopelow, MD, on October 20, 2004, providers have discretionary latitude in interpreting the Standards. Here is the latest on operationalizing the guidelines:

- Having a rigorous peer review process will help resolve conflict of interest
- Faculty with financial relationships with multiple commercial supporters may be less biased and conflicted than those with relationships with a single company
- Providers are responsible for determining faculty honoraria (grantors should not dictate levels of payment for faculty)
- Providers can still ask supporters for suggestions for topics and faculty (speakers/authors) as long as the providers maintain control over the decision-making process

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## Legislative update

**T**he California legislature recently passed SB 1765 (aka "fair drug marketing bill"), which requires pharmaceutical companies to comply with the PhRMA Code and OIG Guidance. The bill, sponsored by the California Public Interest Research Group, requires pharmaceutical companies doing business in California (and anyone who engages in promotional activities supported by companies) to adopt a comprehensive compliance program for interactions with health care practitioners. The bill was signed by Governor Schwarzenegger on September 29, 2004. We'll have to wait and see what the implications will be.

## Resources

**H**ere are some tips for ways to stay "ahead of the curve" with medical education:

- Schedule a free CME lunch-and-learn. Nexus will bring its expertise to your workplace. All you need to provide is lunch, attendees, and a list of burning questions. Contact Karen Overstreet for more information on how you can benefit from this program: [next@nexuscominc.com](mailto:next@nexuscominc.com).
- Sign up for Capsules, a great new service from *Medical Meetings* magazine's Executive Editor Sue Pelletier, which highlights news related to CME. Email her at [spelletier@charter.net](mailto:spelletier@charter.net) to get on the electronic distribution list.
- Get involved in PACME—the pharmaceutical company provider section of the Alliance for CME. PACME is being reinvigorated and planning some interesting initiatives for 2005, including some collaborative projects with the North American Association of Medical Education and Communication Companies (NAAMECC). Contact the Alliance ([www.acme-assn.org](http://www.acme-assn.org)) for more information.
- Plan to attend the Alliance for CME's 30<sup>th</sup> Annual Conference (Jan 26–29, 2005, San Francisco Marriott, San Francisco, CA). This is the largest gathering of CME stakeholders in the world.

Nexus President Karen Overstreet was interviewed for the October 12 issue of *Rx Compliance Report*. Regarding the ACCME's definition of conflict of interest in the updated Standards for Commercial Support of CME she said:

*"Potentially it could be detrimental to academic freedom to try to control what physicians are allowed to say...this is a challenge for all of us to come up with some creative ways to produce sound education while still complying with the guidelines."*

Contact Karen at [next@nexuscominc.com](mailto:next@nexuscominc.com) to receive a copy of the Report.

## Next in NEXt

**F**uture issues of *NEXt in Medical Education* will highlight how providers and other stakeholders are adapting to the changing CME environment and discuss tips and tools for operationalizing the new *Standards for Commercial Support*.

## Questions or comments?

Please send case studies, comments, or questions for future issues of *NEXt* to Karen Overstreet at [next@nexuscominc.com](mailto:next@nexuscominc.com).

If you do not wish to receive future issues of *NEXt*, please reply to our email with "unsubscribe" in the subject line.

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