

PHARMACEUTICAL COMPANIES RELATIONSHIPS POSITION STATEMENT January 2019

BACKGROUND

Cancer Voices NSW has reviewed its previous, long-standing policy and position statement on relationships with the pharmaceutical industry, given the increasing role that pharmaceutical companies are playing in relation to cancer treatment, research and service provision. It is important for CVN's credibility and standing in the cancer world as a truly independent voice for those affected by cancer, that its policy and approach to these relationships is based on the reality that pharmaceutical companies are central to the development and approval of new cancer treatments and drugs, other treatments and medical devices. Further, pharmaceutical companies have the capacity to influence decision makers in relation to the subsidising of cancer treatments.

Given this, it is important that Cancer Voices NSW address the current unsatisfactory position regarding the lack of transparency in the provision of information by the industry as to its 'reach' into the cancer world in Australia, particularly through funding such as event sponsorship (including event attendance), and hospitality such as travel, accommodation and meals for members of the medical profession

AIM

To ensure that:

- Cancer Voices NSW retains its credibility as an independent voice for people with cancer as regards its relationships with individual pharmaceutical companies, and the pharmaceutical industry as a whole
- CVN's relationships with the pharmaceutical industry are: informed by data and evidence, transparent, and documented in an accessible way to CVN members, the cancer community and the general public

POLICY ON RELATIONSHIPS WITH THE PHARMACEUTICAL INDUSTRY

Pharmaceutical companies are a major stakeholder in the cancer world as their products are a core component of most cancer treatments. Cancer consumers have an interest in the effectiveness, efficacy, safety, side effects, cost of drugs, and information about clinical trials for which they may be eligible.

Cancer Voices NSW can provide information to these companies to assist in their understanding of the experiences and needs of people with cancer. In turn, these companies provide information that can assist CVN in assessing and distributing information to our constituents about clinical trials and the proper use of medicines.

Cancer Voices NSW recognizes the importance of developing and maintaining communication with the pharmaceutical industry, and developing relationships with companies that produce specific cancer products that will benefit people with cancer as part of their treatment options.

PRINCIPLES OF PHARMACEUTICAL INDUSTRY ENGAGEMENT

Cancer Voices NSW has adopted the following principles as the basis for its relationships with the pharmaceutical industry as a whole as well as with individual companies. They recognise the *Medicines Australia Code of Conduct* (Edition 18, 2015) [Link] and the *Working together Guide* (2008), [Link] jointly produced by the Consumers' Health Forum of Australia and Medicines Australia.

Cancer Voices NSW:

- is committed to total transparency in all its dealings with the pharmaceutical industry and individual pharmaceutical companies

- will engage in dialogue with pharmaceutical companies about cancer treatments for the improvement of the health and wellbeing of our constituents
- will not endorse individual pharmaceutical cancer products
- will not endorse or develop a special relationship with an individual pharmaceutical company.

GUIDELINES FOR ENGAGEMENT WITH THE PHARMACEUTICAL INDUSTRY AND INDIVIDUAL PHARMACEUTICAL COMPANIES

General

Cancer Voices NSW:

- will engage with the pharmaceutical industry association, Medicines Australia as the peak association for the industry
- will attend meetings, briefings, seminars and conferences where information including about new products and treatment protocols relevant to our members is being provided and discussed. CVN will not however endorse or promote any products discussed at these meetings or have its name used to promote such products
- may review pharmaceutical company information and documentation about cancer drugs to ensure its appropriateness in terms of validity and understanding for patient needs
 - CVN will not accept any fee for service or other remuneration or 'in kind' payment for this role
- Executive Committee members may meet with representatives of pharmaceutical companies, provide relevant information about the consumer interest (including relevant information about cancer patients and their experiences of a particular cancer), and gather industry information about cancer drugs as part of our advocacy activities
- will not provide a consultancy service, nor receive a personal payment as a result of meetings with pharmaceutical industry and company representatives, however CVN representatives can be reimbursed for any out-of-pocket expenses
- will maintain a register of involvement with pharmaceutical companies which is available to all members and the cancer community.

Website, promotional material and media releases

Cancer Voices NSW:

- will not include any links from its website to pharmaceutical companies, or display any pharmaceutical company logos on our website or at our events
- logo and promotional information cannot be used by any pharmaceutical company to promote a product or product information
- will not provide any comment, input or support to a pharmaceutical company media release.

Funding:

Cancer Voices NSW:

- will not accept funds from pharmaceutical companies for its core operations, but may accept 'arms length' funding to attend industry-sponsored events when in the interests of people affected by cancer or necessary for the provision of CVN input to activities such as industry events and consultation opportunities
- representatives cannot and will not endorse a product or accept payment from a pharmaceutical company for their services
- will not enter into any third party relationships where funds for activities are provided by pharmaceutical companies
- will review any offer of hospitality including travel and accommodation provided by a pharmaceutical company
- where funding has been accepted, acknowledgement of it will be transparent to the Cancer Voices membership by statements in reports of the full amount and use of the funding
- where a company logo is included in a report as an acknowledgement of funding, it will be displayed at the end of the report

This position statement will be published on the Cancer Voices NSW website.

ACTIONS

- monitor developments and changes in the operation of the pharmaceutical industry in Australia including as to the presence, ownership, and market share of companies
- monitor the operation of individual pharmaceutical companies, including in relation to their funding of cancer research and cancer drug development
- monitor the operation of individual pharmaceutical companies as regards their stated commitment/s to transparency in their business practices including reporting of their investments in cancer research and cancer drug development and on their provision of funding for conferences, events, and hospitality to members of the medical profession
- advocate for greater transparency in the pharmaceutical industry, with the aim of shifting the provision of information by the industry from the currently unsatisfactory approach in Australia to one close to the high level of reporting and transparency that operates in the United States of America under the provisions of the United States' *Physician Payments Sunshine Act* [Link]
- advocate for greater transparency of pharmaceutical industry community funding as to the inclusion of funding information in reporting by all parties in receipt of funding.

KEY RELATIONSHIPS

- Medicines Australia
- Individual pharmaceutical companies
- Health Consumers Forum Australia
- Health Consumers Forum NSW
- Transparency International Australia

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