

Press release

“EFPIA Leadership Statement on Ethical Practices”: Industry restricts product sampling and sets new standards for sales representatives and congresses

Brussels, June 24th 2010: EFPIA, the voice of the research-based pharmaceutical industry in Europe, today released a statement on behalf of the association leadership regarding industry standards.

The statement, agreed by industry leaders, provides EFPIA and its member associations with a clear mandate to champion and enforce the highest possible standards by reviewing a number of areas and, where necessary, issuing additional guidance. The areas for consideration include the conduct of medical sales representatives, placing restrictions on the provision of samples to healthcare professionals, standards for industry sponsorship of exhibitions and medical congresses, and relationships with patient organisations. Industry standards covering the provision of information to patients will also be reviewed. National Ethics Groups will be established to oversee compliance at the local level.

Speaking on behalf of the EFPIA Board, Andrew Witty, CEO of GSK and President of EFPIA said: “Our industry needs to be in touch with society’s expectations and with peoples’ appropriate demands for both greater transparency and for a greater commitment to high ethical standards. Today’s leadership statement is made in this spirit. It strongly reaffirms our commitment to our existing Codes of Practice and to their continuous improvement. We believe that full adherence to these codes is essential, and that breaches should not be tolerated.”

The EFPIA leadership today also invites and encourages those companies which are not within direct or indirect EFPIA’s membership to adhere to these self-regulatory principles adopted by the R&D-based industry. All stakeholders are also invited to provide comment on EFPIA member companies’ behaviour and to offer any suggestions on how to maintain and improve confidence in the pharmaceutical industry as a partner in healthcare.

[The full text of the leadership statement can be found here.](#)

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Contact	Useful links
Colin Mackay, Tel: (+32) 2 626 25 57 E-mail: colinmackay@efpia.org	www.efpia.eu

Editor's note 1:

These are the principal areas where the Board has requested that EFPIA provide additional guidance:

Provision of information:

EFPIA will answer any calls from the EU Institutions to constructively input into the debate on the provision of information.

Medical sales representatives:

EFPIA will provide guidance on adoption of "Charters" to define standards and housekeeping rules for interactions of sales personnel with healthcare professionals.

Samples for healthcare professionals:

EFPIA will support limiting samples, through self-regulation, to a maximum of four samples per year, restricted to the first two years post-launch, except where tighter standards already exist.

Congresses and other meetings:

EFPIA will develop common standards for international meetings and congresses to ensure that exhibitions do not overshadow the main purpose of scientific events.

Relations with patient organisations:

EFPIA will review its code of conduct for relations with patient organisations with a view to requiring mandatory disclosure of financial and in-kind support to patient organisations.

Editor's note 2.

About EFPIA

EFPIA represents the pharmaceutical industry operating in Europe. Through its direct membership of 30 national associations and 40 leading pharmaceutical companies, EFPIA is the voice on the EU scene of 2,200 companies committed to researching, developing and bringing to patients new medicines that will improve health and the quality of life around the world.