

MEDIA RELEASE

AMSA Calls for Caution in Pharmaceutical Marketing to Medical Students

The Australian Medical Students' Association (AMSA) today called on Medicines Australia, the peak representative body for prescription pharmaceutical companies in Australia, to regulate the interaction between their membership and medical students.

Under Australian law and industry standards, members of the general population, including medical students, are free from direct marketing of PBS listed products by pharmaceutical companies.

AMSA President Michael Bonning said that despite this, medical students are frequently exposed to direct marketing of PBS listed products by pharmaceutical companies during their clinical placements.

"Medical students often lack the clinical experience of their senior colleagues which enables them to integrate and evaluate the information provided to them by pharmaceutical companies", Mr. Bonning said.

"Evidence suggests that marketing of PBS listed products to medical students may influence their future prescribing habits", Mr. Bonning said.

Over the weekend, the AMSA National Council, comprised of representatives from each of Australia's 19 medical schools, unanimously endorsed guidelines detailing the appropriate interaction of pharmaceutical companies with medical students and medical student societies.

"It is the responsible role of pharmaceutical companies to provide appropriate, objective and scientifically valid educational resources to medical students", Mr. Bonning said.

"However, this education must accurately reflect peer reviewed evidence and best practice prescribing habits, and should be provided in a manner that complies with legal and professional standards.

"Furthermore, medical schools must ensure that their students are educated about appropriate ethical relationships with the pharmaceutical industry", Mr. Bonning said.

"We urge Medicines Australia to adopt these guidelines into their Code of Conduct, to instill a generation of future doctors with safe, effective prescribing habits that lead to the best possible health outcomes for the patients they treat", he said.

The AMSA Guidelines for the interaction between pharmaceutical companies and Australian medical students are available at www.amsa.org.au

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