



Self Care Sponsorship Policy

General issues

- There are many interests to balance to ensure sponsorship, and the advertising that appears on fact cards, maintains pharmacists' integrity and professionalism, and their independence to recommend to the public the most appropriate medicine, treatment or service.
- Only those sponsors with products and services compatible with pharmacists' standing as ethical health professionals are considered suitable for involvement in the Self Care programme. Sponsorship and advertising needs to complement the goals of the Pharmacy Self Care programme. These are to promote pharmacy's unique position to improve community access to quality health information, increase consumers' health awareness and encourage active involvement in their own health care; provide pharmacies with the opportunity to be recognised as primary centres for health information and advice, and to have pharmacists recognised as authoritative health care practitioners working collaboratively with other practitioners to enhance the wellbeing of the public.
- Sponsorship is important to the Self Care programme. It allows the membership fee (unchanged, at \$395 plus GST, for the last 5 years) to be kept at a reasonable level.

Guiding ethical principles

The Code of Ethics provides important principles to guide pharmacists on matters relating to their professional independence from commercial interests, and these also guide the Self Care programme in its consideration of sponsorship support.

Principle 1.5 – Independent information - The pharmacist must ensure that advice is independent of commercial considerations.

Principle 4.4 – Commercial interests not to override good practice – The pharmacist must ensure that commercial interests are not permitted either to override the independent exercise of their own professional judgement on behalf of a patient or to compromise the standard of care provided by them or to affect their cooperation with other healthcare providers.

Principle 6.3 – Professional independence from commercial organisations – The pharmacist must only accept tokens, favours, gifts, or hospitality from commercial organisations when this does not compromise their professional independence or judgement or their ability to comply with their professional and legal duties.

General sponsorship policy matters

- The Self Care programme, and pharmacists' services and their professional ethics, must not be compromised by a sponsor's involvement, and by the

funding/sponsorship it provides. The programme, and pharmacists' services, must remain independent of the sponsor and the nature of the relationship must be transparent and open to scrutiny.

- Self Care accepts sponsorship from relevant health industry organisations and companies including, but not exclusively, pharmaceutical companies - providing they fit broadly with the goals of the programme. The products and services provided by sponsors and potentially able to be advertised on the fact cards must be aligned with the health issues covered by the programme. Products and services are required to be of proven efficacy and are ones pharmacists, as respected and ethical members of the health care team, can have confidence in supplying, providing or recommending.
- The sponsor will not exert undue influence on the Self Care programme, or its members, regarding the practices of the programme or the information provided.
- The text of Self Care fact cards will, largely and as much as possible, contain reference to medicines only generally, and not by specific brand name. Brand-name advertising will be restricted to the standard advertising space on the front left hand column.
- All product advertising for medicines must gain TAPS approval – which is the responsibility of the sponsor to obtain.
- Brand-name advertising on fact cards is not to be deemed as endorsement by Self Care or the Pharmaceutical Society of the product.
- Pharmacists are not encouraged, nor required, to sell or supply the products advertised on fact cards. Their obligation is to ensure patients receive the most appropriate medicines/treatment independent of advertising and sponsorship support.

Sponsorship can address only on a very broad basis the Self Care programme's goal to improve pharmacy's financial performance through raising pharmacists' profile and marketing the professional aspects of pharmacy practice. It is important that the public views pharmacy and pharmacists beyond the medicines they provide, pharmacies as places from which they can access authoritative information that assists them get well and stay well, and pharmacists as independent advisers who can steer people to other services and practitioners when necessary. While most sponsorship comes from the traditional pharmaceutical sector, Self Care can look beyond that, providing such sponsorship maintains or enhances the integrity of pharmacists and their services.

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