

"Managing Relationships with Industry: A Physician's Compliance Manual"

Steven C. Schachter, William Mandell, Scott Harshbarger, and Randall Grometstein, 2008, 288 pages, Academic Press, \$39.95

Review by Norman M. Goldfarb

"Managing Relationships with Industry: A Physician's Compliance Manual" is a practical, comprehensive and timely handbook for physicians, compliance officers, and pharmaceutical companies navigating the treacherous conflict-of-interest shoals in their relationships. The ethics of the pharmaceutical industry and its physician/investigator customers are back in the headlines, with predictable implications. The subjects of these stories probably do not think of themselves as evil, but their opinions are thin armor against harm to their reputations and finances.

Ethical challenges can be expected when the pharmaceutical industry spends about \$13,000/physician annually on direct marketing to the physicians that prescribe its products. That sounds like a lot of money, but it is only 4% of the \$330,000/physician of U.S. expenditures on pharmaceuticals. Conflicts of interest do not necessarily result in ethical lapses, but this book helps physicians minimize these lapses, in both actuality and appearance.

The most straightforward way to put a physician in an awkward ethical position is to give him or her a gift. The rules for giving gifts to physicians have become even more restrictive than in the past. A recent study explains why: Eighty-five percent of medical students said that public officials should not be allowed to accept a gift of \$50 from a prospective bidder. In contrast, only 46% said medical students should not accept a gift of \$50 from a drug company.

The book consists of six chapters:

- Background
- Overview of Legal Sources
- Summary of Recent Prosecutions and Investigations
- Application of Law and Professional and Trade Association Standards to Physician Relationships with Industry
- Legal and Ethical Aspects of Specific Physician-Industry Financial Relationships
- Approaching and Adopting Effective Compliance Plans

This book has been selected for
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Essential reading for clinical research professionals

Appendices include model agreements for consulting and for speaking at a continuing medical education activity.

The book is available in bookstores.

Reviewer

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