

Society of Hospital Medicine (SHM)

Principles for Organizational Relationships

The following principles should guide organizational relationships between SHM and another party. In all such relationships the primary consideration should be to uphold, support, and promote the values and mission of SHM. In all its activities, actions and decisions SHM will strive to achieve objectivity and balance basing decisions on evidence whenever possible and considering the best interests of patients, SHM members, hospitalists, and other physicians.

When SHM considers entering into a relationship, whether financial or other, with another organization, entity or corporation:

1. The relationship should promote the values and mission of SHM

The goal of any relationship should be to promote excellence in clinical care, advance the practice of inpatient medicine and promote the needs of our patients and members through education, advocacy, and investigation.

2. The relationship should promote trust in hospitalists and SHM

Trust in SHM and hospitalists is a fundamental prerequisite to advancing the mission of SHM. Any actions that create the appearance of impropriety, even if none exists, can undermine the trust of the public and the profession in hospitalists and SHM. SHM should avoid any relationship that could undermine the public's trust in hospitalists and the mission of SHM.

3. The relationship should maintain SHM objectivity and independence

In entering any relationship SHM must avoid any undue influence from other organizations on the policies, conduct, actions and priorities of SHM. For example, only SHM may determine the content and speakers for a SHM educational conference.

4. Strong consideration should be given to using multiple sources whenever possible for sponsorship of SHM events, services, programs, conferences or products

In order to maintain the independence and objectivity described above, SHM will diversify its sources of support as much as possible. SHM will strive to obtain multiple sponsors for any individual activity to minimize the possibility of undue influence.

5. The relationship does not constitute an endorsement by SHM

SHM may enter into relationships with organizations with which it shares common interests or goals without endorsing every aspect of the other organization. Although SHM will not partner with organizations whose primary mission is directly at odds with the values and mission of SHM, a partnership should not imply that SHM endorses all policies, values and missions of the partner organization.

6. The relationship should be disclosed to SHM members and the public.

Disclosure to SHM members and the public increases accountability, promotes oversight and decreases the possibility of the appearance of impropriety. While SHM will hold its actions to a higher standard of conduct, a minimal standard will be that all relationships should hold up to public scrutiny and that SHM should be willing to have any relationship reported by the media. SHM will disclose all such relationships in the appropriate forum.

7. The SHM Board will review and have final decision-making authority over all such relationships.

In order to minimize undue influence, the SHM Board and/or Executive committee will review and approve all relationships with outside organizations. No individual shall have the authority to enter SHM into a relationship with an outside organization.

The SHM Ethics Committee will be available at the discretion of the Board to consider, discuss and advise about issues that arise regarding these principles.

Adopted November 11, 2000

Revised April 1, 2003 (name change to SHM)