



 Ireland

Irish Medical Council Launches Updated Guidance for Physicians on Relationships Between Physicians and Industry

The Irish Medical Council has published new ethics guidelines outlining standards for physicians' interactions and relationships with industry, including pharmaceutical and medical device companies.

The guidelines supplement the Medical Council's comprehensive "Guide to Professional Conduct and Ethics for Registered Medical Practitioners," now in its eighth edition. Drafted following a process that allowed input from key stakeholders, the guidelines include information on the acceptance of gifts and hospitality, attendance at meetings with corporate sponsorship, and other topics that are subject to regulation in Ireland.

"Professionalism is at the core of the patient-doctor relationship and is absolutely fundamental for patient safety and the delivery of high-quality health care," said Una O'Rourke, Director of Education, Training and Professionalism at the Medical Council.

Among its tenets, the Medical Council's guide to professional conduct and ethics states that physicians should not rely solely on promotional literature distributed by pharmaceutical companies for information about particular drugs or medical devices. Instead, they should source independent, evidence-based information on the benefits and risks of all medication and medical devices before they prescribe them. The new guidelines are available at www.medicalcouncil.ie.

Source: Irish Medical Council news release, May 18, 2018

 United Kingdom

GMC Participates in Joint Approach to Addressing Safety Concerns of Physicians in Training

The UK's General Medical Council (GMC) has joined several other organizations in issuing a joint statement that reinforces their shared commitment to strength-

ening "exception reporting"—the process by which UK physicians-in-training raise safety concerns.

Exception reporting was introduced in 2016 as a mechanism to help trainee physicians in England report any concerns about the environments in which they were training. But since its introduction, a variety of impediments to its effectiveness have been documented, including organizational cultures, levels of staff engagement and differences in local processes.

The joint statement declares that for exception-reporting to be effective, the reporting process must be less burdensome for physician-trainees. It also calls for more accurate data and better sharing of quantitative and qualitative data between organizations on matters related to physician training.

Partnering with the GMC in the effort are several other organizations, including NHS Improvement, the Academy of Medical Royal Colleges, the British Medical Association, the Care Quality Commission, Health Education England and NHS Employers.

Although the exception-reporting joint statement only applies to the process in England, the GMC is currently working with partner organizations in Scotland, Wales and Northern Ireland to find ways of improving support for physicians-in-training in those countries, as well.

"Doctors need to have confidence that if they raise a concern, then action will be taken. Exception reporting, when it works as it should, can improve the quality of medical education and safeguard patient safety, as well as helping the morale of doctors in training," said GMC Chief Executive Charlie Massey. "A collaborative and cross-organizational approach is necessary to streamline and standardize the process, and then to encourage a culture in which trainees feel able to speak up when necessary."

The full statement is available at www.gmc-uk.org/news.

Source: GMC Statement, June 15, 2018