

Business Courtesies and Gifts; Vendor Interactions

Policy Statement: Palmetto Health workforce members should use this policy as a guide when business courtesies, gifts or charitable contributions are offered to individuals or departments. These guidelines govern activities with those outside of Palmetto Health and do not pertain to actions between the organization and its workforce nor among Palmetto Health's workforce members (refer to Human Resources' Solicitation policy)

Requesting or otherwise soliciting business courtesies, gifts, charitable contributions and the like violates Corporate Compliance's Code of Conduct. It is the purpose of Palmetto Health's Foundations to conduct such activities on the organization's behalf. All other requests are inappropriate (see Corporate Compliance Charitable Contributions policy). Acceptance of meals, entertainment and routine marketing materials is permissible as described below. Workforce members are cautioned to use good judgment when determining those items falling into this category and should seek guidance from management or Corporate Compliance as necessary.

Definitions:

1. **Business Courtesies/Gifts:** for purposes of this policy, refers to funds, gratuities, sponsorship, meals, products, gifts, travel, entertainment, recreation, benefits and other courtesies provided by another individual, a patient, company or organization (vendor) in the context of business-related discussions.
2. **Routine Marketing Materials:** for purposes of this policy, refer to pens, cups, notepads and other small-dollar items provided by an individual, company or organization as a means of marketing.
3. **Family Member:** as an individual who is the spouse, parent, brother, sister, child, mother-in-law, father-in-law, son-in-law, daughter-in-law, grandparent or grandchild or a member of the individual's immediate family.
4. **Vendor:** Any entity doing or seeking to do business with Palmetto Health.
5. **Workforce Members:** for purposes of all policies contained in the Compliance Manual, refers to employees, independent contractors, volunteers, students, trainees, medical residents/fellows, ACGME accredited programs, and other persons whose conduct in the performance of work for Palmetto Health is under the control of the organization.

Guidance:

1. Workforce members or their family shall not accept or request, coerce or in any way solicit vendors, potential vendors or others to provide business courtesies, gifts or charitable contributions to Palmetto Health, its for-profit or not-for-profit subsidiaries or for personal use.
In an effort to prevent the appearance of special consideration, business courtesies should not be provided to family members of workforce members.
2. Workforce members or their family should not solicit or accept business courtesies or donations that are then directed to the Palmetto Health Foundation. It is the responsibility of the Foundation to conduct all solicitation activities on behalf of Palmetto Health.
3. Meals, entertainment and routine marketing materials are often provided during in-services, at educational conferences and in other situations. These items, of nominal value, are permissible to accept. Frequency should be a consideration when evaluating these situations.

Should a routine marketing item be of significant value, it should not be accepted.

4. Door prizes awarded at educational conferences or meetings that are not specifically targeted by the contributing organization are permissible.
5. Training and educational opportunities, including meals or other refreshments, are permissible as long as the education is directly relevant to the department's job duties and the training is directly related to products or services beneficial to Palmetto Health.

- 5.1. Workforce members may not accept industry-sponsored training and educational opportunities that include paid registration, travel and/or accommodations. This includes traveling with a company representative in his/her vehicle or other mode of transportation.
- 5.2. Educational grants for conferences and other educational activities sponsored by professional societies and other organizations may be accepted upon approval of the area Vice President.

6. Gifts from Patients

6.1.1. In accordance with the Human Resources Gratuities policy, Palmetto Health believes that every patient, regardless of economic circumstances, is entitled to the best services possible. For this reason, no workforce member is permitted to solicit or accept gifts or gratuities from patients, their families or friends for any services rendered. Anyone wishing to make a donation or gift to Palmetto Health should be referred to the one of the Foundations.

6.1.1.1.1. Consumable gifts (e.g. cookies, popcorn tins, etc.) that can be shared with all staff members are acceptable.

7. Pharmaceutical Companies

7.1. The Pharmaceutical Research and Manufacturers of America (PhRMA) represents research-based pharmaceutical and biotechnology companies. Ethical relationships with healthcare professionals are critical to their mission of helping patients through the development and marketing of new medicines. In an effort to avoid the perception of inappropriate interactions, they have developed the PhRMA Code on Interactions with Healthcare Professionals that dictates how company sales representatives should interact with healthcare professionals.

7.2. Participation in the PhRMA Code is voluntary; however, most reputable companies are represented. Find the list of companies at http://www.phrma.org/code_on_interactions_with_healthcare_professionals/.

7.3. The PhRMA Code addresses interactions with respect to marketed products and related pre-launch activities. Examples of activities that are not allowed include, but are not limited to:

7.3.1. Prohibiting the distribution of non-educational items (such as pens, mugs and other “reminder” objects typically adorned with a company or product logo) to healthcare providers and their staff. The PhRMA Code acknowledges that such items, even though of minimal value, may foster misperceptions that company interactions with healthcare professionals are not based on informing them about medical and scientific issues.

7.3.2. Prohibiting company sales representatives from providing restaurant meals to healthcare professionals. Occasional meals in healthcare professionals’ offices may be provided in conjunction with informational presentations.

7.3.3. Companies should not provide any entertainment or recreational benefits to healthcare professionals.

References: PhRMA Code on Interactions with Healthcare Professionals www.phrma.org; Federal Health Care Program Anti-kickback Statute

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Signature on File

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