



Travel and Scholarships:

Best Practices for Academic Medical Centers*

The Problem:

In the past few decades, the pharmaceutical industry has been increasingly involved in the funding of scholarships and medical education.¹ A pharmaceutical company interested in encouraging the growth of a certain specialty might offer grants for education or residencies in order to attract more individuals to this area of practice. Similarly, pharmaceutical companies sometimes fund travel to educational events and device-training sessions for physicians. In 2006, 37% of department chairs at Academic Medical Centers (AMCs) reported receiving industry support for residencies or fellowship training.²

The direct provision of funding to an individual or a department creates a relationship between the sponsor company and the recipient of the grant.³ AMCs should institute standards for accepting money for scholarships or travel, in order to prevent actual or perceived “quid pro quo” relationships between physicians and industry.

Best Policy Practices:

AMCs should establish a central repository for scholarship and travel donations. Grants should not be earmarked for specific people or divisions. Individuals, departments, divisions and programs should be prohibited from accepting grants directly.

This policy should not apply to travel related to outside professional activities such as speaking or consulting. Travel that occurs within the purview of outside professional activities can be reimbursed directly. ■

Model Policy

University of Maryland:

The travel policy prohibits faculty and students from accepting industry funds for travel to training and educational events. The scholarship policy dictates that all donations must be directed to the University of Maryland Baltimore Foundation, and that “funds received from the Foundation are disbursed at the direction of the School. The evaluation and selection of trainees receiving scholarships or educational funds must be the sole responsibility of School faculty and must be overseen by the Chair with no involvement by the donor industry. The Chair will report allocations of funds annually to the Dean or Dean's designee”.

[http://
medschool.umaryland.edu/
PoliciesProcedures.asp](http://medschool.umaryland.edu/PoliciesProcedures.asp)

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For more information, contact IMAP at CCOI-database@columbia.edu or 212-305-6914.

References

1. Lo B, Field MJ, eds. *Conflict of Interest in Medical Research, Education, and Practice*. Washington, DC: The National Academies Press; 2009.
2. Campbell EG. Doctors and drug companies—scrutinizing influential relationships. *New England Journal of Medicine*. 2007;357(18):1796-1797. Elliott C. The Drug Pushers. *The Atlantic Monthly*. Online ed. Washington, DC: Atlantic Media Company; 2006.
3. *Ibid.* 1

Figure 1.

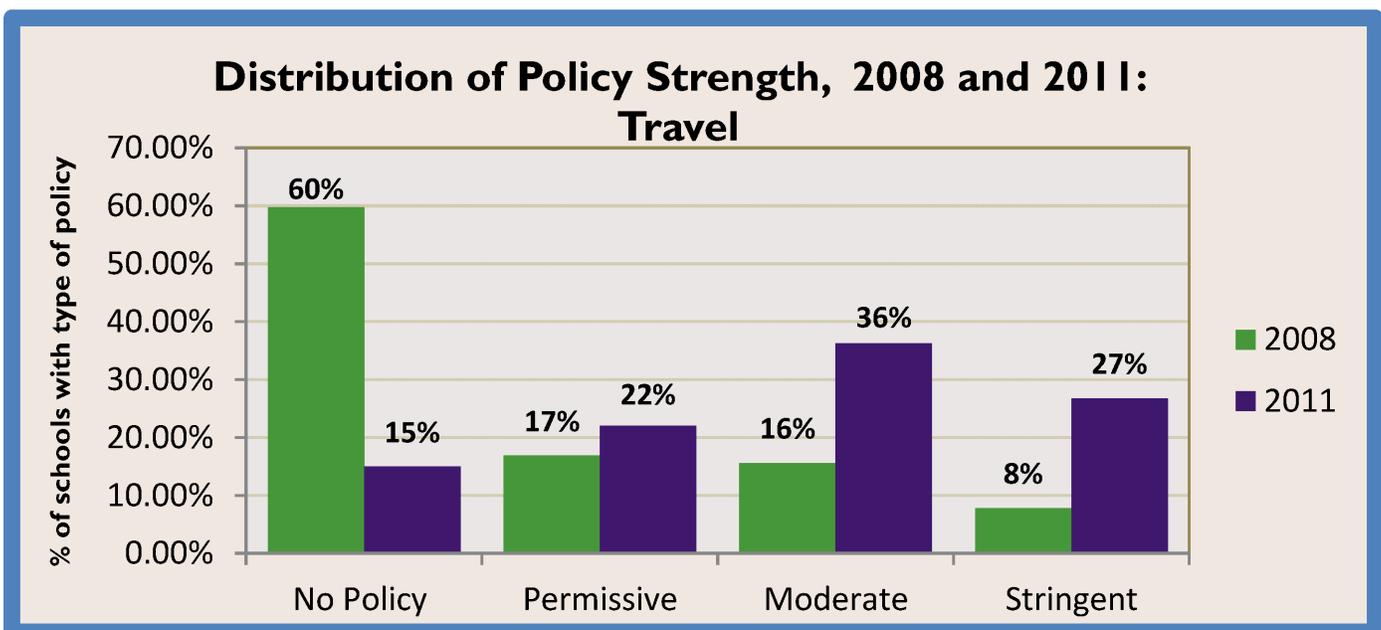


Figure 2.

