



Clinical Update

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New Rules for Professional Education

In recent years, there has been an examination of the role of company supported professional continuing education. While pharmaceutical companies and medical device manufacturers are responsible for breakthroughs and work with health care professionals in development of new therapies and technology, experts and governmental agencies have expressed concern that some presentations and activities called "professional education" are actually company marketing "disguised" as continuing education.

Influencing Professionals

Some advocates believe that promotional items can influence prescribing and purchasing decisions made by physicians and nurses, not to mention note pads, quick reference guides or a pizza lunch, when provided by a company.¹ On the other hand, physicians surveyed appreciated the opportunity to meet with pharmaceutical and medical device company representatives (often over meals purchased by the representative) and did not believe their decisions were biased as a result.²

At the same time, the concept of "conflict of interest" has come to the forefront. While definitions vary, the concern is that nurses and physicians who have financial relationships with industry may be biased in their presentations, whether in published articles or professional continuing education activities.³

The combination of these concerns has led to new rules for company representatives and for professional continuing education.

Rules for Reps

There are two sets of rules: one from the [Pharmaceutical Manufacturers Association](#) guides biopharmaceutical company representatives. The other, from the [Advanced Medical Technology Association](#) (AdvaMed) guides representatives from device manufacturers. Companies are responsible for training their personnel on these codes of ethics and monitoring their compliance. These are the rules that govern gifts, meals, educational support, and other giveaways from companies.

Rules for Continuing Education

As the codes for interactions with health care professionals were being published, organizations that approve professional continuing education (CE) activities for nurses and physicians were updating their rules and guidelines regarding commercial sponsorship of CE as well. While some groups want to eliminate commercial support of education, others believe that this financial support is important to keep costs down for participants and to disseminate information health care professionals need to know about new drugs and technologies.

A key common element for CE approval is a clear separation between product-specific information and training and approved professional education. Another is full disclosure of financial support and any business relationships authors have with companies.

Our Commitment to You

We have taken a number of steps to meet both the letter and the spirit of these guidance documents. Atrium remains committed to supporting nursing professional education and providing support to enhance bedside practice. Here's what you need to know:

- Professional education and product-specific information are now separated online. Professional education is available at www.AtriumU.com and product-specific information including training videos, instructions for use, and posters are available at www.AtriumChestDrains.com (You can also reach the product-specific information through the main Atrium Medical site at www.AtriumMed.com, where it's always been.) Also see page 3 for reminders you can print on card stock and put on your computers for quick reference.
- We are in the process of creating a brand new Atrium University site, which will contain an evidence center in addition to activities for CE credit and other useful information.
- Professional education activities will be based on recognized principles and scientific research. They will be relevant to professional nursing practice. And, they will be provided at no charge for the participants.
- Activities for credit will be peer reviewed for accuracy and any bias before publication.

As part of this process, we will also need to invite you to "opt in" to a *Clinical Update* subscription so that educational e-mail from Atrium University will be separate from product-specific information from Atrium Medical Corporation. Your next issue of *Clinical Update* will be coming from Atrium University in the fall.

For 30 years since its founding in 1981, Atrium has been committed to supporting nurses so that they can provide the best possible care for patients with chest tubes. While new rules and regulations require some changes to the format, that commitment has never wavered. Through educational grants to Atrium University, we will continue to provide you with the best information available – making you *Masters in Chest Drainage*.

Sources

1. Pew Prescription Project: Why small gifts matter 2009. Fact Sheet. Available online at http://www.prescriptionproject.org/tools/sunshine_docs/files/WhySmallGifts_CB.pdf
2. Korenstein D, Keyhani S, Ross JS: Physician attitudes toward industry. Arch Surg 2010;145(6):570-577. [PubMed Citation](#)
3. Global Education Group: CME Crossroads: A survey of continuing medical education analysis, criticism, research and policy proposals. 2010. Available online at: <http://www.globaleducationgroup.com/cme-crossroads-white-paper/>

In The Literature

It Never Hurts to Check

Researchers in Omaha report on a study evaluating workers' technique using personal protective equipment in the current issue of *AJIC*. Ten participants performed patient care tasks in a simulated environment for a patient on standard airborne and contact precautions. None of the health care workers did a seal check on the N95 mask; 90% did not use proper mask removal technique and did not remove items [in the order recommended by CDC](#); 70% did not remove gloves first. During care, 80% touched unprotected areas of the body. Replicating this study with a variety of workers will uncover knowledge gaps and direct targeted education.

Source: Beam EL, Gibbs SG, Boulter KC, Beckerdite ME, Smith PW: A method for evaluating health care workers' personal protective equipment technique. *American Journal of Infection Control* 2011;39(5):415-420. [PubMed Citation](#)

Listening to Simulation

The current issue of *Respiratory Care* provides a comprehensive review of options for providing high quality digital heart and breath sounds that can be integrated into simulation technology to provide learners with the correlation between sounds and pathophysiology. From auscultation torso task trainers to full body mannequin to recording stethoscopes and sound generators – it's all here.

Source: Ward JJ, Wattier BA: Technology for enhancing chest auscultation in clinical simulation. *Respiratory Care* 2011;56(6):834-845. [PubMed Citation](#)

Evidence-based Sepsis Nursing Care

The World Federation of Critical Care Nurses formed an international group of nursing experts to develop guidelines for recommended practices in caring for patients with severe sepsis. The published document makes sixty-three recommendations in six areas and cites 255 references. The six areas are: infection prevention, infection management, initial resuscitation, hemodynamic support, other supportive nursing care and pediatric considerations. This is essential reading for all critical care nursing professionals.

Source: Aitken LM, Williams G, Harvey M, et al.: Nursing considerations to complement the Surviving Sepsis Campaign guidelines. *Critical Care Medicine* 2011;39(7):1800-1818. [PubMed Citation](#)

Desired Schedule Key to Staying in Workforce

A fascinating study in the latest issue of *Nursing Economic\$* examined the relationship between work schedules and nurses' decisions about staying in the profession once they enter their 40s. Researchers surveyed RNs in Maine at license renewal and analyzed 8,038 responses. They discovered that dissatisfaction was not simply due to "overwork," but a mismatch of work schedules and nurses' expectations. Seeking to change hours of work is a statistically significant precursor to nurses' considering leaving the profession when there is a gap between hours assigned and preferred hours. Schedule flexibility could have an impact on hospital retention.

Source: Kirschling JM, Colgan C, Andrews B: Predictors of registered nurses' willingness to remain in nursing. *Nursing Economic\$* 2011;29(3):111-117.

On the World Wide Web



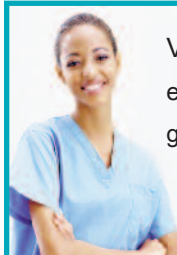
It's been a year since the Department of Health and Human Services announced a plan to make government health data more accessible and user-friendly. A new site, [HealthData.gov](#), collects a variety of health data from agencies across the federal government and provides tools to make these data useful to practitioners and policy-makers.

The raw data is available in the data/tools section, with 241 data sets in 9 categories. These downloads are in different formats, but as raw data sets, may not be particularly useful. That's where the Apps Expo comes in. This is a collection of applications that use government health data and other publicly available data to help visualize patterns and answer questions.

For example:

- At [vitals.com](#), physician data is compiled into an application that can be searched by name, location, specialty, or medical condition.
- [Health.cgi.com](#) compiles hospital data from government, hospital association and local data sources to provide comparisons between hospitals on a number of levels. The deeper you drill down, the more detail provided, including rating against state and national benchmarks and even current ER wait time.
- At [Bing Health Maps](#) choose a state and a health indicator, and the map changes colors to reflect data measures in each county.
- The [Medicare Prescription Drug Benefit Dashboard](#) provides visual data by state, number of prescriptions or cost, top drug classes, drugs by name and generic v. brand dispensing.

Be careful, though! As with Facebook, hours can fly by while you explore all these tools.



Visit **Atrium University**, a site established through an educational grant from Atrium Medical Corporation that provides educational resources and professional education at www.AtriumU.com



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