

Code/15/68  
25 November 2015

**To: ABPI Member Companies**  
**ABPI R & D Affiliates (for information)**  
**ABPI General Affiliates (for information)**  
**Non member companies that have agreed to comply with the Code**


Dear Colleagues

**Advisory boards**

I am writing to ask all companies to take action in relation to the attached material from the PMCPA.

Advisory boards are one of many activities that the industry undertakes to support high quality patient care. It is, however, crucial for the reputation of the industry that advisory boards meet all the requirements of the Code and UK law.

Yours faithfully



**John Kearney**  
President, ABPI

Enc.

Code/15/69  
25 November 2015

**To: ABPI Member Companies  
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Dear Sir/Madam

### **Advice on advisory boards**

The Prescription Medicines Code of Practice Authority occasionally receives complaints about the conduct and organisation of advisory boards. Although it is acceptable for companies to arrange such meetings and pay health professionals and others for advice, advisory boards must not be promotional.

In addition, the Medicines and Healthcare products Regulatory Agency (MHRA) has concerns about advisory boards. These concerns have been discussed with the PMCPA and were raised by the MHRA at its Hot Topics In Advertising Seminar earlier this year. More recently, in its response to the consultation on changes to the Code, the MHRA reiterated its concerns, noting that it has seen examples during vetting of advisory board meeting proposals that appeared to be promotional and that a recent case and articles in the media raised similar concerns. The MHRA was concerned that relying on complaints was unlikely to be enough to prevent promotion in all cases.

Advice on advisory boards has been available on the PMCPA website ([www.pmcpa.org.uk](http://www.pmcpa.org.uk)) and is now available as a pdf document. Please cascade this through your company to all who work in this area, to include UK, regional and global colleagues to ensure that all relevant staff realise the importance of ensuring that the arrangements for advisory boards are appropriate. Health professionals and others must not be paid to attend promotional meetings.

If you or your colleagues have any queries about advisory boards, do not hesitate to contact the PMCPA (telephone 020 7747 8880) for informal advice. Completed cases involving advisory boards can be found by searching the PMCPA website.

Thank you for your assistance in this important matter.

Yours faithfully



**Heather Simmonds**  
Director

Enc.