



What is conflict of interest? Why is it important?

Conflict of interest exists when an individual, whether a member of a planning committee or a presenter, has an opportunity to influence the content of an educational event through the mention or promotion of products or services of a commercial interest with which he or she has relationship, or through the omission of mentioning competing products or services.

The purpose of identifying and addressing potential conflicts of interest is to ensure proper balance, independence, objectivity, and scientific rigor for educational activities.

The College of Family Physicians of Canada (CFPC) does not view the existence of a financial relationship itself as necessarily implying bias or decreasing the value of an individual's participation in a CME/CPD activity. However, when actual or potential conflicts of interest are identified, organizers and presenters must ensure that they are appropriately addressed.

Who should disclose conflicts of interest? What should be disclosed?

Anyone in a position to control the content of a CME/CPD activity should disclose any and all potential conflicts of interest that are relevant to the content of the presentation and resolve them prior to the CME/CPD activity. The CFPC requires all members of planning committees and presenters to complete the [CFPC Mainpro Declaration of Conflict of Interest](#).

The following are examples of potential conflicts of interest:

Any direct financial interest in a commercial entity such as a pharmaceutical organization, medical device company, or communications firm (“the Organization”) with relevance to the presentation

Investments held in the Organization

Membership on the Organization’s advisory board or similar committee

Current or recent participation in a clinical trial sponsored by the Organization

Member of a speakers’ bureau connected to the Organization

Any other paid relationship with the Organization

Holding a patent for a product referred to in the CME/CPD activity or marketed by a commercial organization

Organizers of CME/CPD activities can prevent or reduce the risk of conflict of interest by selecting planning committee members and presenters who do not have relationships to commercial interests related to the content. They may also assign to the presenter aspects of the content that do not place the presenter in a potential conflict of interest.

Determining the right course of action can be facilitated by asking a few useful questions:

How were the topics and the presenter for the activity determined?

What content is expected to be included in the presentation?

Will the presenter be making clinical recommendations?

What sources of evidence will support the presentation?

Organizers of CME/CPD activities should maintain documentation of the resolution of conflict of interest in their files.

Templates provided by the CFPC must be used (see below); however, colours and slide themes may be modified to match that of the program.

Instructions:

Examples are shown below; text in red font is to be modified by provider as per the program.

Where a faculty/presenter has no relationships to disclose, simply indicate “Not Applicable” under the heading “Relationships with Commercial Interests” on Slide 1.

Where a program has received no commercial support (this includes monies for food, logistics assistance such as registration, AV set-up, etc.), simply indicate “No Commercial Support” on Slide 2.

