



**SINGAPORE ASSOCIATION OF
PHARMACEUTICAL INDUSTRIES**

Guiding Principles for Virtual Interactions with Healthcare Professionals

Objectives

The purpose of this document is to provide additional interpretation and further guidance towards the relevant provisions of the SAPI Code of Conduct. This set of guiding principles is not binding by itself and it must be read with the spirit of the SAPI Code in mind and in accordance with applicable laws, regulations and/other relevant codes of practice. Members are encouraged to take into account the considerations given in this set of Guiding Principles when implementing the SAPI Code in their daily practice. The overall intention of this document is that the cooperation between companies, HCPs and other stakeholders is always based on high ethical standards and clearly aims to benefit patients.

Introduction

Interactions between healthcare professionals and the pharmaceutical industry are essential and ensure that patients have access to the medicines they need and that healthcare professionals have up-to-date comprehensive information about the diseases they treat and the medicines they prescribe. SAPI members remain committed to activities that provide accurate, balanced and scientifically valid information and educational content to healthcare professionals to advance their medical knowledge and expertise.

With technology evolving rapidly, and connectivity increasing, many companies are conducting virtual engagements and interactions with healthcare professionals. These activities include video sales calls, remote or tele-detailing, virtual meetings, and online conferences. These activities may take place through various means and media.

1. Meals provided at Member Company-initiated Virtual Meetings (Article 7.1 Events)

- Virtual meeting refers to a scientific event/meeting organized in the format when speakers and participants are present in different physical locations and utilize audio and/or video to communicate online, allowing the individuals to share data and information in real-time. *Examples of online meeting tools are Skype, ZOOM, WebEx etc.*
- It is appropriate to use a meal delivery service to provide hospitality to a healthcare professional in their workplace when the virtual meeting is conducted during meal times. This should be done with the presence of a company staff member (whether physically or virtually) and in conjunction with a formal educational activity. *Examples such as product presentation by company representative or scientific lecture by external expert (speaker).*

- Meals cannot be provided to a healthcare professional in the absence of a company staff member (whether physically or virtually), or without educational context.
- Meals cannot be provided to individual healthcare professional in a one-on-one remote meeting or discussion between healthcare professional and company representative.
- Meals should not be provided to a healthcare professional in their own home. This is irrespective of whether they are participating in a webinar or other form of educational activity.
- Meals provided must be reasonable and modest (limited to S\$30 per person per meal – excludes GST and delivery charges), therefore upholding the integrity and reputation of the industry.

2. Promotional materials provided via electronic communication tools (Article 5 and Article 6)

- With technology improving rapidly, and connectivity increasing, members are leveraging more forms of electronic communication tools (other than Pharmaceutical Product related websites) to engage and interact with healthcare professionals.
Examples are emails, LINE, WhatsApp, Facebook Messenger etc.
- Members may provide promotional materials to HCPs via electronic tools only when it is complied with or approved by local laws and regulations, in terms of the content and distribution via electronic channels.
- All related social media communications should be done from a portal or profile authorised by the member company.

Members should establish processes and controls to:

- i. verify HCP personal data to ensure that such promotional materials will be provided to the specific recipient (targeted HCP).
 - ii. obtain consent or permission from the recipient before sending such promotional materials.
 - iii. ensure that product promotion or education is relevant to the audience (e.g. product should not be promoted unless it is registered in countries which the healthcare professional attendees are licensed).
- Additional Remarks:
In accordance with the local privacy law (PDPA), members will need to ensure that any HCP personal data collected or used for the purpose of interaction with HCP both face-to-face and/or via virtual means must be complied with such law, in this case, HCP consent may be required.