
How to Hold Pharma-free Meetings

Speaker expenses

- ✓ Use local talent. Identify respected researchers and clinicians with no commercial conflicts of interest from your own institution, or neighboring academic medical centers, and invite them to speak. Or invite a physician from another department—for example, a surgery department could invite an infectious disease fellow to discuss antibiotics.
- ✓ Create a pharma-free speaker's fund for out-of-town speaker expenses. Possible contributors to the fund include: deans' offices; clinical departments; residency programs; individual physicians; other individual donors. Base funding for this could be included in annual departmental budgets.
- ✓ Decrease the amount of honoraria offered to speakers. Encourage speakers to forego an honorarium as a gesture of support for pharma-free education. Publicly thank or honor speakers who forego honoraria.
- ✓ Invite Federal employees. Many wonderful scientists and physicians are employed by Federal agencies or state or county health departments. Federal agencies include NIH, FDA, CDC, AHRQ, CMS, DOD, SAMHSA, HRSA and the VA. Government employees usually cannot accept honoraria and may be able to fund their own travel.
- ✓ Piggyback talks. Plan a talk for when an expert is in town for another meeting, or personal reasons. Convention centers host many medical meetings and usually post meeting programs on their websites many months in advance, allowing planners to identify who will be in town and possibly available for a talk.

Food

- ✓ Have attendees bring their own food.
- ✓ Ask local restaurants, markets, and caterers to donate one or two meals a year for pharma-free rounds. Many businesses are happy to donate a meal to promote their business. Be sure to acknowledge contributors.
- ✓ Provide lunch through a combination of program funds and contributions to a lunch fund (contributors can include attendings, local businesses and individuals, etc.)
- ✓ Subsidize lunch, but have residents contribute part of the costs (for example, UNM has asked residents to contribute \$75 per year)
- ✓ Decrease lunch costs by identifying local catering businesses that will charge less, or discount food for socially conscious causes (e.g. Nourish International provides lunch at UNC for \$3/person; UNM contracts with a local Latina community group to provide inexpensive food.)
- ✓ Hold grand rounds at faculty homes, on a rotating basis. Whoever is hosting is responsible for cooking or buying food.

Other Actions

Remove reminder items from educational and clinical settings

- ✓ **Confiscate branded pens.** Carry pharma-free pens with you (Pharm-Free, PharmedOut, No Free Lunch, or unmarked) and substitute pharma-free pens whenever you can.
- ✓ **Barter unmarked items for promotional items.** Purchase some inexpensive clocks, mugs, pads, sticky notes, tissue boxes and other “reminder” items; offer to replace branded items with unbranded items.
- ✓ **Unbrand items.** Cover pharmaceutical logos on items with Pharm-Free logos, which can be downloaded from <http://www.pharmfree.org>.

BYOL (Bring your own lunch) Bring your own food to pharma-funded rounds, conferences, and meetings. PharmedOut’s popular [Sandwich Guide](#) can be downloaded from <http://www.pharmedout.org/PhOSandwichRecipes2WEB.pdf>.

Spread the Word. To decrease resistance to refusing pharma gifts and lunches: Distribute materials from [PharmedOut.org](#), AMSA [PharmFree.org](#) and [No Free Lunch.org](#). (Resources include downloadable slideshows, educational exercises, and factsheets)

Invite a PharmedOut or AMSA Pharm-Free speaker to educate colleagues about how pharmaceutical companies influence prescribing.

These ideas have been contributed by many individuals. Do you have other suggestions? Please send ideas to <http://www.pharmedout.org/contactus.htm>.

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The American Medical Student Association’s Pharm-Free Campaign encourages medical students and physicians to refuse money, gifts, or hospitality from the pharmaceutical industry; to seek out objective sources of information; and to avoid conflicts of interest in medical education and practice.

PharmedOut is an independent, publicly funded project that empowers physicians to identify and counter inappropriate pharmaceutical promotion practices. News, slideshows and other teaching tools, and more than 300 credits of pharma-free CME are available at our website.