



RHODE ISLAND MEDICAL SOCIETY
POLICY REGARDING CORPORATE SPONSORSHIPS

Presented to the RIMS Finance Committee and revised June 22, 2015

Presented to the RIMS Board of Directors for review and action on July 13, 2015

Revised and approved as revised on July 13, 2015

Purpose

RIMS' program of Corporate Sponsorships provides value to RIMS members by enhancing the advantages and rewards of membership while keeping members' dues affordable. RIMS' Corporate Sponsorships save members time and money while augmenting the resources available to RIMS for the pursuit of its mission in the service of members.

Organizations selected for Sponsorship are well equipped and well positioned to address particular occasional or ongoing needs of physicians, their staff and their families. Each has an established history as a solid corporate citizen, and each has a successful track record of understanding and meeting the special needs of health professionals in ways that extend far beyond the scope of RIMS' own mission and capacities. In entering into a relationship with RIMS, each Sponsor commits itself to a professional business ethic in dealing with RIMS members and in most instances is able to offer special consideration to members, often in the form of discounted services and products.

Beyond discounts, members gain value through the influence RIMS is able to exert based on its formal and public relationship with a Sponsor. RIMS conducts an ongoing dialogue with each Corporate Sponsor and educates Sponsors to physicians' needs and concerns. Corporate Sponsorships afford RIMS leverage to guarantee and enforce quality service for members, both as individuals and as groups. Sponsors, in turn, gain distinction and visibility in the eyes of RIMS members, their associates and families, and commit themselves to ethical business practices and material support for RIMS' mission.

Definitions

"Member" refers to a member of the Society. Advantages and privileges accorded to members by Corporate Sponsors may, in addition, accrue to others who are associated with or employed by members' medical practices, and to members' immediate families.

"Sponsor" refers to a corporate entity that enters into a formal agreement with RIMS for the benefit of the entity, RIMS and its members. The agreement may vary with the nature of the entity but normally entails a commitment to certain standards of doing business, specific concessions for RIMS members, certain kinds of marketing support from RIMS and an annual subvention to support RIMS' operations, work and mission.

Steps to Sponsorship

1. Suggestions for potential Sponsors may originate from any source.
2. Staff shall perform initial screening and vetting of potential Sponsors.
3. Staff shall disclose competing interests, if any. The Executive Director has the final decision as to whether a competing interest disqualifies staff from participating in the evaluation and recommendation process.
4. If staff vetting yields a candidate of sufficient stature and member-relevance for potential status as a Sponsor, staff will present a recommendation to the Finance Committee.
5. The Finance Committee will review the application for Sponsor and act by majority vote, whether in person, by telephone conference, or by electronic means. The Finance Committee may refer the matter back to staff for further investigation and analysis.

6. If the Finance Committee votes to approve a Sponsor, it shall forward the matter to the Board of Directors for final action, which the Board may accomplish by expeditious means, including electronic telecommunication.
7. The process for vetting at all levels shall be guided by the Evaluation Standards below and by other criteria that may be deemed relevant to a particular instance.
8. Finance Committee members shall disclose any competing interests and recuse themselves if competing interests cannot be resolved. The Chair of the Finance Committee shall have final determination of whether a disqualifying conflict exists.
9. Participants in the approval process for Sponsor shall be mindful of the importance of timeliness of action in RIMS' efforts to cultivate and maintain successful external relationships.
10. The RIMS Board of Directors may amend, replace or rescind these policies at any time by majority vote, as per the Bylaws of the organization.

Evaluation standards for Sponsors

Evaluation of a corporate entity for recognition as a Sponsor shall ordinarily include the following considerations, along with other aspects that may be applicable in a particular instance:

1. The applicant provides products or services that members need or want either occasionally or continually, and the applicant has the capacity to deliver such reliably.
2. The applicant's marketing approach to members is predominantly educational and designed to help members make informed choices in their own best interest.
3. The applicant has the capacity to favor members over non-members with regard to pricing, service or other specified and measurable criteria.
4. Acceptance of the applicant as a Sponsor will not disadvantage or alienate RIMS members or prospective members.
5. Acceptance of the applicant as a Sponsor will not jeopardize relationships with other existing or potential Sponsors.
6. The applicant's mission and operation align advantageously with RIMS' own mission and/or operation, and/or that of the RIMS-IBC, and strengthen RIMS' ability to carry out its own mission in the service of members. For example, the applicant may offer RIMS or the RIMS-IBC potential for growth and/or cost reduction and/or operational efficiencies in addition to serving members directly.
7. The applicant has not been the subject of concerning complaints filed with the Better Business Bureau, like organizations or other relevant entities that may reflect upon the applicant's reputation and standing in the community.
8. The applicant has not been the subject of sanctions or adverse reports from any regulatory or other government agency to an extent or in particular matters that may be of concern to RIMS and its members.
9. The applicant is willing to sign an agreement that will normally provide for:
 - a. Measures and reporting of services rendered to members.
 - b. Term and duration of agreement.
 - c. Termination provisions.
 - d. Hold harmless provisions.
 - e. Acceptance of RIMS' standards of conduct with regard to interaction with RIMS members. (RIMS forbids high-pressure sales tactics by mail, email, telephone or in person; "no" means "no.")

Information provided by applicants shall normally include:

1. References with contact information. Preferably, references will include physicians and/or other health care professionals who have received services within the last 18 months.
2. Evidence of understanding and of experience meeting the particular needs and expectations of health professionals.

3. Evidence of sufficient capacity to serve members and the specific strategies to provide value to members.