



**ALLEGHENY COUNTY
MEDICAL SOCIETY**

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Gifts from Pharmaceutical Industry to Physicians

Recent criticism regarding the relationship between physicians and the pharmaceutical industry does a disservice to the majority of physicians who conduct themselves ethically and spend countless hours treating and caring for patients.

Physicians practice medicine because they want to improve the lives of patients to the best of their abilities. However, critics unfairly suggest that physicians are engaged in a conspiracy with the pharmaceutical industry solely for profit and accuses physicians of “peddling” drugs in return for luxurious trips and huge fees.

Pharmaceutical industry representatives often offer items to physicians or their office staff. These items tend to be promotional gadgets, such as notepads, pens, mugs and key chains, bearing the name of the company and product, as well as brochures that provide healthcare information to patients. Most physicians accept samples of products, which are given to patients who require them and who might have difficulty paying for these medications.

Most interactions between physicians and pharmaceutical representatives are legitimate briefings about new products, drugs or clinical information. Undoubtedly there are physicians who accept gifts of greater value. However, most physicians maintain ethical standards and consider the appropriateness of items offered.

The Allegheny County Medical Society advocates for the best interests of patients and encourages physicians to refer to the guidelines created by the American Medical Association regarding promotional gifts, which may be found at <http://www.ama-assn.org/ama/pub/category/4001.html>

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The Allegheny County Medical Society has 2,500 physician members from all specialties and is dedicated to providing leadership and advocacy on healthcare issues for the community and physicians. The organization has been serving Allegheny County since 1865. For more information, please contact ACMS at 412-321-5030 or acms@acms.org.