

The ABPI Code of Practice for the Pharmaceutical Industry sets standards for the promotion of medicines for prescribing to health professionals and the provision of information to the public about prescription only medicines. Publicity is the main sanction when breaches of the Code are ruled. The latest cases ruled in breach of Clause 2 of the Code (a sign of particular censure) are highlighted below.

Roche Products Limited and Bayer Schering Pharma have each breached the ABPI Code of Practice for the Pharmaceutical Industry (2006 edition) and brought discredit upon, and/or reduced confidence in, the pharmaceutical industry.

Roche – Case AUTH/2165/9/08

For a patient adherence and incentive scheme where Roche provided vouchers to young patients as an incentive to use their medicine and thereby encouraged patients to ask their health professional for a specific prescription only medicine, Roche was ruled in breach of the following clauses of the 2006 Code:

- Clause 2** - Bringing discredit upon and reducing confidence in the pharmaceutical industry.
- Clause 9.1** - Failing to maintain high standards.
- Clause 20.2** - Encouraging members of the public to ask their health professional to prescribe a specific prescription only medicine.

Bayer Schering – Case AUTH/2172/10/08

Because its overseas affiliates promoted a medicine in the UK prior to the grant of a marketing authorization on more than one occasion, did not prominently acknowledge sponsorship of a paid for supplement and did not present up-to-date data in the supplement, Bayer Schering in the UK was ruled in breach of the following clauses of the 2006 Code:

- Clause 2** - Bringing discredit upon and reducing confidence in the pharmaceutical industry.
- Clause 3.1** - Promoting a medicine prior to the grant of a marketing authorization which permits its sale or supply.
- Clause 7.2** - Failing to ensure that all claims were accurate, balanced, fair, unambiguous and based on up-to-date evidence.
- Clause 7.3** - Using misleading comparisons.
- Clause 9.10** - Failing to clearly indicate its sponsorship of material relating to medicines and their uses.
- Clause 18.2** - Using a promotional quiz.

The full case reports were published in the PMCPA February Code of Practice Review and are also available at www.pmcpa.org.uk.

The Prescription Medicines Code of Practice Authority (PMCPA) administers The Association of the British Pharmaceutical Industry's (ABPI) Code of Practice for the Pharmaceutical Industry at arm's length from the Association itself. The Code covers the promotion of medicines for prescribing to health professionals and the provision of information to the public about prescription only medicines.

If you have any concerns about the activities of pharmaceutical companies in this regard, please contact the **PMCPA** at **12 Whitehall, London, SW1A 2DY** or complaints@pmcpa.org.uk.

The Code and other information, including details about ongoing cases, can be found on the PMCPA website.