

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 case ruled in breach of Clause 2 of the Code (a sign of particular censure) and/or where companies were required to issue a corrective statement or were publicly reprimanded is highlighted below.

Astellas Pharma Europe Ltd has breached the ABPI Code of Practice for the Pharmaceutical Industry and brought discredit upon, and reduced confidence in, the pharmaceutical industry. Astellas UK Limited and Astellas Europe were required to issue a corrective statement and both companies have been publicly reprimanded.

Astellas Pharma Europe – Case AUTH/2780/7/15

For providing false information in response to Case AUTH/2747/1/15, (which was ruled in breach of the Code and related to arrangements for a meeting) and reporting the outcome of Case AUTH/2747/1/15 to its staff in a dismissive manner, Astellas Europe was ruled in breach of the following clauses of the Code:

- Clause 2** - Bringing discredit upon, and reducing confidence in, the pharmaceutical industry.
- Clause 9.1** - Failing to maintain high standards.

The Code of Practice Panel reported Astellas UK, which was responsible under the Code for its European parent, and Astellas Europe to the Code of Practice Appeal Board. The Appeal Board noted that the UK health professionals who attended the meeting had been provided with a corrective statement and a case report which was misleading (Case AUTH/2747/1/15). This was totally unacceptable. The Appeal Board decided to require Astellas

UK and Astellas Europe to issue a second corrective statement to all the UK attendees at the meeting (Case AUTH/2780/7/15); in addition both companies were publicly reprimanded and required to be audited.

Following these audits Astellas Europe subsequently admitted it had provided inaccurate information. This was considered by the Panel which again reported Astellas Europe and Astellas UK to the Appeal Board which noted an institutional failure with respect to compliance. The Appeal Board decided to require a third corrective statement, to publicly reprimand both companies and to report them to the ABPI Board. The ABPI Board suspended Astellas UK from membership of the ABPI for 12 months (subject to review) commencing 24 June 2016.

The interim case report which includes the wording of the corrective statements is available at www.pmcpa.org.uk. The public reprimands appear on the front cover of the PMCPA August Code of Practice Review which is also available at www.pmcpa.org.uk.

The Prescription Medicines Code of Practice Authority (PMCPA) was established by The Association of the British Pharmaceutical Industry (ABPI) to operate the ABPI Code of Practice for the Pharmaceutical Industry independently of the ABPI. The PMCPA is a division of the ABPI. 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 7th Floor, 105 Victoria St, London, SW1E 6QT or email: complaints@pmcpa.org.uk.

The Code and other information, including details about ongoing cases, can be found on the PMCPA website: www.pmcpa.org.uk