

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 where a company was required to issue a corrective statement, is highlighted below.

Thame Laboratories has breached the ABPI Code of Practice for the Pharmaceutical Industry and brought discredit upon, and reduced confidence in, the pharmaceutical industry.

Thame Laboratories – Case AUTH/2971/8/17

For sending a letter to clinicians about Thamicarb Oral Solution (sodium bicarbonate) which was misleading and disparaged the professional opinions of the reader, Thame was ruled in breach of the following clauses of the Code:

- Clause 2** - Bringing discredit upon, and reducing confidence in, the pharmaceutical industry.
- Clause 3.2** - Promoting a medicine in a manner inconsistent with the details listed in its summary of product characteristics (SPC).
- Clause 7.2** - Making misleading claims and implications.
- Clause 7.4** - Making claims which could not be substantiated.
- Clause 8.2** - Disparaging the professional opinion of a health professional.
- Clause 9.1** - Failing to maintain high standards.
- Clause 9.5** - Referring to the MHRA in promotional material without being specifically required to do so.

The Code of Practice Appeal Board required Thame Laboratories to issue a corrective statement to recipients of the letter at issue.

The case report was published in the Code of Practice Review in August and is 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.