



## **IBLCE Board of Directors' Statements on Commercial Sponsorship or Funding of Professional Education for Lactation Consultants**

### **September 8, 2009**

In compliance with its earlier statements on commercial sponsorship of CERPs, the IBLCE will no longer recognize Ameda as a long term CERP provider after December 31, 2009 and will not accept CERP applications from Ameda after September 30, 2009.

### **June 23, 2009**

At its March 2009 meeting, the IBLCE Board of Directors deferred a final decision about awarding CERPs to educational programs offered by Medela, Inc. until after it had an opportunity to review the larger issue of awarding CERPs to education funded or sponsored by commercial entities. At that time it established a special taskforce to review this matter and report back to the Board with its recommendations. As a result of this review, IBLCE has resolved that, as of June 30, 2009, IBLCE will no longer accept CERP applications from Medela.

Furthermore, in response to the larger issue of commercial funding or sponsorship of professional education, the IBLCE Board is committed to removing any possible perception of influence by industry on professional education for its certificants. Therefore, as a first step toward this goal, the Board has resolved that:

- As of June 30, 2009, IBLCE will no longer accept CERP applications for education funded or sponsored by companies that manufacture or distribute products that fall within the scope of the International Code of Marketing of Breast-milk Substitutes<sup>1</sup>.
- For the purposes of IBCLC recertification, IBLCE will accept CERPs awarded to educational programs funded or sponsored by such companies provided that the education is completed by no later than December 31, 2009.
- As of January 1, 2010, all such companies are prohibited from issuing CERP certificates to participants in their educational programs.

Consistent with the most recent thinking<sup>2</sup> on the topic, in 2010 IBLCE will publish policies, definitions and guidelines regarding commercial funding or sponsorship of professional education for its certificants. IBLCE will continue to consider commercial sponsorship or funding of professional education on a case-by-case basis, consistent with IBLCE's determination to avoid any real or perceived conflict of interest.

These decisions are in the best interests of the lactation consultant profession, the public IBCLCs serve, and society at large. We thank our certificants, applicants and sister organizations for their patience while we carefully considered this issue.

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<sup>1</sup> [http://www.who.int/nutrition/publications/code\\_english.pdf](http://www.who.int/nutrition/publications/code_english.pdf)

<sup>2</sup> Examples of relevant references include:

- Brennan TA, Rothman DJ, Blank L, et.al. Health industry practices that create conflicts of interest. *JAMA*.2006;295(4):429-433.
- *Canadian Medical Association Journal*. What's wrong with CME? 2004;170(6):917.



- Rothman DJ, McDonald WJ, Berkowitz CD, et al. Professional medical associations and their relationships with industry. *JAMA*. 2009;301(13):1367-1372.
- International Council of Ophthalmology. Standards for commercial support. <http://www.icoph.org/ed/edcme.html#1>
- Sandal J. No such thing as a free lunch. *Midwifery*. 2008; 24(2):123-125.
- World Medical Association Statement Concerning the Relationship Between Physicians and Commercial Enterprises. Approved 2004. <http://www.wma.net/e/policy/r2.htm>

#### **April 7, 2009**

The IBLCE Board of Directors is concerned that its desire to look, in depth, at the entire issue of approving CERPs for education funded or sponsored by *any* commercial vendor has been lost in the concurrent decision to permit CERPs to be awarded, *for the time being*, to educational sessions funded or sponsored by Medela, Inc. Recently, Medela's marketing practices have been deemed not to be in compliance with the International Code of Marketing of Breast-milk Substitutes. As noted in the IBLCE statement dated March 30 [http://www.iblce.org/documentsNEW/Medela\\_publicStatement\\_03.30.pdf](http://www.iblce.org/documentsNEW/Medela_publicStatement_03.30.pdf), IBLCE continues to monitor Medela's marketing practices. The Board has been weighing the information about Medela's marketing practices as judiciously and quickly as possible and is attempting to be clear and measured in its response.

IBLCE has an over-all duty, under its by-laws and CERPs provider requirements, to support the International Code of Marketing of Breast-milk Substitutes and all subsequent relevant World Health Assembly resolutions. Many programs that were under review for CERPs approval and many that are already planned include programs sponsored or funded by Medela. Due to the financial ramifications for many individual IBCLCs and continuing education providers, the IBLCE Board could not make a final decision on this issue without more extensive review and created a task force at the March Board meeting for this purpose.

IBLCE has communicated its intent to the ILCA Board of Directors and welcomes input on the issue of commercial sponsorship of CERPs as it continues to review this issue.

#### **March 30, 2009**

At its March 21, 2009 meeting, the Board of Directors of the International Board of Lactation Consultant Examiners (IBLCE) considered recent developments regarding the marketing practices of Medela, Inc., manufacturers of breast-milk pumps, milk-collection containers, and feeding bottles and nipples (teats). In particular, it focused on Medela's alleged violation of the International Code of Marketing of Breast-milk Substitutes by including feeding bottles and nipples in its product promotion to the general public, and what effect this might have on approval of CERPs (Continuing Education Recognition Points) for educational sessions funded or sponsored by Medela.

Among its considerations, the Board noted that the aim of the International Code is to contribute to the provision of safe and adequate nutrition for infants; that the mission and vision of IBLCE are consistent with the aim of the Code; that there are differing points of view within the international lactation consultant and breastfeeding support community concerning interpretation of the Code; and that Medela's declared intention in marketing its products was to support breastfeeding and breast-milk feeding and, as needed, to provide other means for ensuring safe and adequate nutrition for infants, consistent with the aim of the Code.



In the light of these considerations and the fact that, as a precautionary measure prior to its March 21<sup>st</sup> meeting, IBLCE had suspended review of applications for CERPs for education funded or sponsored by Medela, the Board decided that:

- IBLCE resume granting CERPs for sessions funded or sponsored by Medela while observing closely Medela's marketing practices;
- IBLCE reserve the right to alter its CERPs approval policy should circumstances warrant any change;
- IBLCE review its policy and practice regarding the approval of CERPs funded or sponsored by *any* commercial entity.

IBLCE recognizes that its decision to reinstate granting CERPs for sessions funded or sponsored by Medela is at variance with the conclusion reached by other organizations. However, in adopting a broad view of the situation, IBLCE affirms that the overriding consideration in any action it takes in this regard is the extent to which it contributes to the best possible feeding outcome for the greatest number of mothers and children worldwide.