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**WEBSITE PROVIDES U.S. PRESCRIBERS
WITH FREE, ACCREDITED CME COURSES ON
PHARMACEUTICAL INDUSTRY MARKETING PRACTICES**

*Web Portal Hosted by Federation of State Medical Boards
Expanded to Include More Courses on Impact of
Pharmaceutical Marketing on Prescribing Practices*

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE: July 8, 2008

DALLAS – A Web portal providing U.S. physicians with access to free, accredited CME courses about pharmaceutical industry marketing techniques and their effect on prescribing practices has been expanded to include additional courses.

The website (www.fsmb.org/re/open/modules.html) is funded by a grant from the Attorney General Consumer and Prescriber Education Grant Program, which was created as part of a 2004 consumer protection settlement with Warner-Lambert, a division of Pfizer, Inc., that resolved allegations of deceptive “off-label” marketing of the drug Neurontin.

The national program is designed to educate health care professionals about pharmaceutical industry marketing practices and provide tools for accessing unbiased sources of information about drugs. For example, two modules developed by the Georgetown University Medical Center (GUMC) discuss requirements regarding new drug approvals and how generic drugs are tested and approved.

“We want to educate doctors about the fact that generic drugs are held to exactly the same standard as different batches of branded drugs,” said Adriane Fugh-Berman, M.D., associate professor of Physiology and Biophysics at GUMC.

Although pharmaceutical sales representatives may misinform doctors that generic drugs may contain 20 percent less drug than brand-name medications, different batches of drugs may differ slightly in potency, but allowable variability never approaches 20 percent, said Dr. Fugh-Berman.

“Doctors want to take the best care of their patients, but misinformation from drug reps can interfere with good medicine,” said Dr. Fugh-Berman. “We want to prevent doctors from increasing the dose of generics to compensate for their supposedly weaker effect, a practice that increases the risk of adverse medication effects.”

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Accredited Courses Available Free to Prescribers

Most courses on the portal are available free of charge to licensed medical prescribers and some may be taken for continuing medical education credit.* Courses currently available include:

- Drug Approval in the U.S.: How Drugs Get to Market
- Generic Drugs: Prescribing Sensibly
- What's Hype? What's Right? Assessing New Information from Pharm Reps to the Latest Journals
- Why and how are drugs approved?
- There's no such thing as a free lunch ... or dinner
- A Clinician's Guide to Critical Appraisal of Clinical Trials
- Pharmaceutical Marketing: Its Goal is to Influence Your Prescribing Practices
- Principles of Rational Prescribing

The Federation of State Medical Boards Research and Education Foundation developed and implemented the website to disseminate CME courses developed by grant recipients. These include the Kaiser Foundation Health Plan of Colorado, Georgetown University Medical Center, the Lovelace Clinic Foundation, Massachusetts General Hospital (MGH) Institute of Health Professions, the Meyers Primary Care Institute, Northeastern Ohio University College of Medicine and Pharmacy, the University of California, San Francisco, and Wake Forest University Health Sciences.

The FSMB Foundation is working in partnership with the University of Texas Southwestern Medical Center to provide accreditation for educational programs developed by grant recipients. Additional accredited modules from grant recipients will be distributed via the website as they are completed.

**This activity has been planned and implemented in accordance with the Essential Areas & Policies of the Accreditation Council for Continuing Medical Education through the joint sponsorship of The University of Texas Southwestern Medical Center and the Federation of State Medical Boards Research and Education Foundation. The University of Texas Southwestern Medical Center is accredited by the ACCME to provide continuing medical education for physicians.*

The [Federation of State Medical Boards](http://www.fsmb.org) (FSMB) is a national not-for-profit organization representing the 70 medical boards of the United States and its territories. The FSMB's mission is to continuously improve the quality, safety and integrity of health care by developing and promoting high standards for physician licensure and practice. Visit the FSMB's website at www.fsmb.org.

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