



**For Immediate Release: Dec. 21, 2009**

Contact: Drew Carlson, (817) 868-4043;

[dcarlson@fsmb.org](mailto:dcarlson@fsmb.org); [www.fsmb.org](http://www.fsmb.org)

## Federation of State Medical Boards Foundation Provides CME Courses on Drug Industry Practices

*Educational website provides A-to-Z background for physicians on prescribing and drug industry practices – including impacts of drug development and marketing*

DALLAS – A new web-based Continuing Medical Education (CME) initiative by the Federation of State Medical Boards Foundation is seeking to educate physicians on various aspects of the relationship between the medical community and the pharmaceutical industry.

Though the development and use of prescription medications is a critical part of medical practice in the United States, the level of awareness and understanding of drug industry practices – ranging from the development of new compounds to their marketing – varies and is not as high as it should be among physicians. That's part of the driving force behind the FSMB Foundation's Online Prescriber Education Network (OPEN), which is offering physicians free CME credit to become better educated about prescribing and the impact of drug industry practices on medical practice.

OPEN provides approximately 50 multimedia, interactive CME courses about various aspects of the drug industry through its portal, which can be accessed at the FSMB website ([www.fsmb.org/foundation.html](http://www.fsmb.org/foundation.html)). Nearly all of the courses are free. Just a sampling of the content at the portal includes:

- Drug industry marketing practices and their effect on prescribing
- Understanding the drug approval process
- General best practices in prescribing
- The use of generics vs. name-brand drugs
- How to use evidence-based medicine in prescribing

- Understanding adverse drug events and how they are reported

These and many other CME topics are available for CME credit offered in partnership with such organizations as Wake Forest University, the Kaiser Foundation, University of Illinois, and others.

“We are trying to create one place where physicians can go to get a variety of information about the prescribing process and the drug industry,” said FSMB Foundation President Nancy Achin Audesse. “This is critical to our long-term mission of ensuring that physicians practice at a peak level of professionalism.”

While the clinical side of drug prescribing is a standard part of medical training, the wider parameters of the relationship between physicians and the drug industry are not as well covered, according to Achin Audesse. This side of the physician-pharma equation can have a great bearing on one’s medical practice, she said.

The project was made possible by a substantial 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. The settlement resolved allegations of “deceptive off-label” marketing of the drug Neurontin.

In addition to CME courses, the site offers access to relevant state and federal statutes and databases of information about the safety and efficacy of prescription medications, making it a valuable repository of information for researchers as well as physicians. Achin Audesse says that the portal has been designed for ease-of-use and efficient completion of CME credits.

“It’s basically an A-to-Z approach,” she said. “Our goal is to make it as useful as site as we possibly can – unbiased, straightforward, and fact-filled.”

The FSMB Foundation is the research and education arm of FSMB, providing funding for projects to expand the knowledge of both the public and medical professionals of challenges impacting health care and health care regulation. It recently announced a new strategic plan aimed at providing more resources for state medical boards and the physician community.

Some of the CME modules at the FSMB website have limited availability (some will come to a close in 2010, others in 2011 and 2012) so physicians are encouraged to visit the site and sign up soon.

To learn more, visit [www.fsmb.org/foundation.html](http://www.fsmb.org/foundation.html) and click on the “Online Prescriber Education Network” link on the left side of the page, or call 817-868-4000.

###