HMBANA Statement on Conference Advertisers and Code Support

The Human Milk Banking Association of North America (HMBANA) supports breastfeeding and human milk use as the biologic norm and a public health imperative. Mother's own milk for her baby is the optimum food, particularly for ill and high risk infants. Parents should receive evidence-based information and support about breastfeeding, and the expression, handling and storage of human milk. This includes information about manual/hand expression, and the safe use of any equipment and feeding supplies they choose to use (including breast pumps, tube- cup- syringe-feeding, bottles, and teats).

By motion on July 21, 2015, HMBANA reaffirmed its support for the model policy *International Code of Marketing of Breast-milk Substitutes* and relevant subsequent World Health Assembly (WHA) Resolutions ("*the Code*"), and recognizes the need to restrict inappropriate marketing practices, and to hold marketers, health workers and health care systems accountable. HMBANA also recognizes the professional conflict of interest inherent in pharmaceutical and medical device manufacturers' commercial support of education intended for health workers and their professional associations.

Code-related [WHA Resolution 61.20 (2008)](http://www.who.int/gb/ebwha大奖/wha61/wha6120/en/) encourages nations to promote the safe use of donor milk through human milk banks for vulnerable infants, mindful of cultural and religious beliefs. Other Resolutions warn about the appearance of an inappropriate conflict of interest for health workers (49.15, 1996) and programmes for health professionals (58.32, 2005) to accept general funds or in-kind contributions from manufacturers who market Code-covered products. However, when
a marketer purchases display space at an educational conference of healthcare providers, information about Code-covered products may be shared if it meets defined circumstances.\(^1\)

HMBANA milk banks strive to offer human milk only in situations where mother's own milk is unavailable or insufficient. Many human milk donors use a breast pump to express extra milk for donation to a HMBANA milk bank. Staff and trained volunteers at HMBANA milk banks are frequently asked questions, by milk donors, about breast pumps, milk storage containers, and feeding supplies. The HMBANA conference is intended to provide education to healthcare professionals working with breastfeeding families, human milk donors, and non-profit donor human milk banks.

The International Code contains distinct recommendations for consumers, health care systems, health workers, and manufacturers/distributors. HMBANA is organized to support the mission of non-profit donor human milk banks. HMBANA seeks to balance the risk of undue influence by commercial interests (pharmaceutical, medical device, and Code-product manufacturers) against the benefit of analyzing manufacturer-provided information in a setting designed to allow unfettered review, critique and skepticism by health worker conference attendees.

1 The "Model Law" for Code implementation, at Section 14 ("Product information for health professionals") says:
"Manufacturers and distributors may give materials about [Code-covered] products to health professionals if such materials (1) are restricted to scientific and factual matters regarding the technical aspects and methods of use of the product; (2) provide references to published studies" regarding the health efficacy of the products. See, Sokol, The Code Handbook 2nd ed., International Code Documentation Centre, Penang, Malaysia, 2005, p. 109.
As such, in the operation of its educational conference, and in support of the Code:

(1) HMBANA will accept advertising, sponsorships and in-kind contributions or support from commercial interests uninvolved with pharmaceutical, medical device, and Code-covered products.

(2) HMBANA will not accept advertising funds, sponsorships, or in-kind contributions or support from manufacturers of infant formula, nor from entities that process human milk using either a for-profit, or public benefit, corporate business model.

(3) HMBANA will not accept advertising funds, sponsorship or in-kind contributions or support from manufacturers of bottles-and-teats or pacifiers/dummies.

(4) HMBANA may, at the Board’s discretion, accept advertising and sponsorship support from commercial interests that market human milk containers and caps, storage and processing systems, and equipment or supplies intended to allow for expression, and breastfeeding-supportive feeding, of human milk.

(5) Acceptance by HMBANA of a vendor or advertiser for these limited purposes is not an endorsement of any products or vendors by HMBANA.

(6) All financial support will be acknowledged both at the conference and to the donor.

All advertising and sponsorship monies received by HMBANA are placed in the general fund to offset the overall costs of the conference. To meet conditions for approval of continuing education credits, HMBANA does not allow commercial interests to (a) underwrite costs for specific meals or events within HMBANA’s conference; (b) participate in decision-making about conference speakers or educational content; (c) underwrite the appearance of any speaker at the HMBANA Conference.