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AMSA praises med schools on conflicts efforts

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Created Dec 17 2010 - 10:16am

The American Medical Student Association gave its stamp of approval to most medical schools, saying that they finally have instituted "strong" conflicts-of-interest policies. In its annual report on policies governing medical schools' interactions with industry, the AMSA said that 52 percent get a grade of A or B, *Pharmalot* reports.

That's an increase of 22 percentage points over last year's 30 percent. Of the 152 schools studied, AMSA gave an A grade to 19 and a B to 60 more; some 26 failed the test, including 12 that didn't respond to the association's requests for information.

As *Pharmalot* notes, AMSA gave a perfect score to two schools: University of South Dakota Sanford School of Medicine and Florida State University College of Medicine. And it hailed one-third of schools for their training students to recognize how industry marketing can affect their judgment and for teaching them to consider potential conflicts.

Of course, the tighter conflicts policies that AMSA cites are part of a nationwide--even international--backlash against close relationships between drug makers on one side and academia, physicians and researchers on the other. New laws mandate disclosure of pharma's payments to doctors; some prohibit gift-giving, even when a gift amounts to a cup of coffee. The new attitudes also have cramped sales reps' style as more and more clinics and hospitals restrict their access.

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