

Best Medicines Coalition

STATEMENT ON FUNDING SOURCES

The Best Medicines Coalition is a patient-driven and volunteer-based organization which is committed to safe and timely access to the best evidence-based medicines for all Canadians. The BMC operates as an alliance of individuals and organizations representing the voices of millions of Canadians living with or affected by chronic disease and life-threatening illness.

In order to sustain the organization, the BMC actively solicits funding from a variety of sources, both private and public. The pharmaceutical industry is a major supporter, including both trade associations and individual companies. In the past, the BMC has also received government grants, specifically from Health Canada, to fund special projects. In addition, government funding is regularly provided to cover travel and accommodation expenses where BMC patient representatives participate in policy consultations. While the BMC does not charge fees to members, some member organizations appoint a staff representative, and this expertise is viewed as in kind support.

All participation in the BMC and the process for developing positions and activities are clearly delineated in its Terms of Reference. All activities are clearly patient and volunteer based with key decisions made by a five-member Operations Committee, including a chair. The Operations Committee is elected by a broader Steering Committee which is comprised of representatives of each member organization. All committees and working groups are comprised exclusively of patient representatives, with no representation from outside funding organizations. All positions taken are solely in support of the organization's mission and are patient driven.

BMC members, including members elected to the Operations Committee and the Chair, do not receive any personal financial compensation for their work on behalf of the organization. All BMC funding is allocated to staff support for activities such as facilitating networking among BMC's members through meetings and conference calls, developing policy position papers and other communication materials and arranging consultative meetings with policy decision makers and other stakeholders, as well expenses such as travel, meeting logistics and various other suppliers and services to support activities.

To ensure that the mission and goals of the BMC are not influenced or jeopardized, all members adhere to clear Principles and Codes for Ethical Conduct and Partnerships, which are appended to the BMC's Terms of Reference.

Specifically, the BMC's principles and codes stipulate that the organization will not endorse specific products or services, although specific examples of treatments which exemplify access issues are sometimes cited. In addition, it is stated that the parameters of relationships and partnerships will be defined to ensure no undue influence or conditions override BMC's mission, goals, priorities and operations.

Since its inception, the BMC has emerged as a recognized voice for patients across Canada and its success can be attributed to its ability to speak on behalf of patients independently from corporate interests. The BMC is frequently called upon by policy decision makers at both federal and provincial levels of government to convey patient positions and concerns.