

OMeGA mission

OMeGA Medical Grants Association is committed to supporting orthopaedic graduate medical education and advancing the orthopaedic profession by reducing conflicts of interest and promoting transparency. This was true when OMeGA was established in 2008 and continues to be a guiding principle in 2020.

The OMeGA Board is held to high standards

The OMeGA Board annually pledges to:

- have no “financial interest” in any orthopaedic medical device, pharmaceutical and biotechnology companies. “Financial Interest” shall mean ownership or personal compensation arrangements such as employment, consulting, speaking, gifts, or development relationships. Ownership of less than 5% in publicly traded securities and mutual funds in orthopaedic medical device, pharmaceutical and biotechnology companies will not be considered a Financial Interest.
- not participate in developmental/financial negotiations with medical industry for education or research funding on behalf of the orthopaedic department of an institution. OMeGA board members are the ultimate determining body for orthopaedic program grants and participation in these negotiations could raise conflicts of interest.
- disclose any other financial or other personal considerations that may compromise, or may have the appearance of compromising, their ability to serve as an objective evaluator of graduate medical education programs.

The same standards apply to the Review committee; however, they may hold leadership roles within their institution. These roles must be disclosed, and they too must recuse themselves from consideration of grant applications made by institutions with which they have been associated, currently and in the last two years.

Due diligence

Given OMeGA’s focus on being conflict-free and unbiased, we annually review the CMS Open Payment site for payments to our Board and Review committee members. Although we understand that reports of payments are not necessarily indications of improper relationships, Open Payments Reporting is intended to create a more transparent environment while disclosing information about health care providers to the public. From the CMS website (<https://www.cms.gov/OpenPayments/About/Open-Payments-Data-in-Context.html>): “Transparency will shed light on the nature and extent of these financial relationships and will hopefully discourage the development of inappropriate relationships.”

For the 2019 year

Board item investigation

- There is a \$119.45 Food and Beverage entry from DePuy Synthes Sales for Dr R. Dale Blasier; however, he believes this was submitted to Open Payments by mistake and is disputing this payment.
- Dr Langdon A. Hartsock received a payment in the Travel and Lodging category from Smith+Nephew Inc in the amount of \$146.42. Dr Hartsock traveled to Duke University to observe a surgeon use a Smith+Nephew hip device his hospital contracted for use.
- Dr Wayne J. Sebastianelli received \$21.39 for Food and Beverage from the Stryker Corporation. Dr Sebastianelli believes the amount is incorrect and is disputing the entry.

Advisory board investigation

- Dr William W. Tomford received \$133.01 for Travel and Lodging from Zimmer Biomet Holdings Inc. and \$125 for Food and Beverage from Flexion Therapeutics Inc. Dr Tomford attended an educational dinner for Flexion Therapeutics where he did not receive goods or services. He does not recognize the Zimmer Biomet entry and has

inquired about this payment. Dr Tomford is the Tissue Bank Director for the Vericel Corporation, where he receives \$500 annually.

Review committee investigation

- Dr Ngozi M. Akabudike received \$104.19 in the Food and Beverage category from Skeletal Dynamics Inc for attending a presentation at the American Society for Surgery of the Hand annual meeting.
- Dr Walton W. Curl received \$19.28 in the Food and Beverage category from Sanofi-Aventis US LLC.
- Dr Syed A. Hasan received \$1,411 for Education from Arthrex, Inc. While he paid for his travel and hotel when visiting Arthrex headquarters to learn about new equipment, this was the cost to perform techniques using a cadaver. The \$1,239 entry for Education from Supreme Orthopaedic Systems LLC was reported under his name by mistake and will be correctly attributed to his department. The \$106.40 for Travel and Lodging from Supreme Orthopaedic Systems LLC pertains to this same arthroscopic cadaver course which included a teaching component for residents from his program. He received \$95.73 in one payment from Bayer Healthcare Pharmaceuticals Inc., \$42.26 in two payments from Medtronic USA, Inc., \$24 in two payments from Arthrex, Inc. for Food and Beverage. Dr Hasan does not recognize the Bayer Healthcare Pharmaceuticals Inc. and Medtronic USA, Inc. payments and is disputing these entries.
- Dr William T. Obremskey received \$1,644 for Honoraria and \$1,640 for Travel and Lodging from Synthes GmbH. Dr Obremskey is a member of the AO anti-infection technical committee that meets twice a year. The AO organization is indirectly supported by an endowment from DePuy Synthes which indirectly covers travel and expenses for AO functions.
- Dr Jonathan N. Sembrano received \$80.95 in two payments for Food and Beverage from Medtronic USA Inc. Dr Sembrano was also the site principal investigator for NuVasive and Orthofix research grants for his institution, however, he did not receive any personal financial gain for this position.

Food & beverage

While it is not easy to remember to ask whether an event is industry funded and to avoid reportable items, there has been a noticeable reduction in reported items since the CMS Open Payment site opened. The Board and the Review Committee have been asked to continue to be vigilant of even minor items, as they are all tracked and reported on the CMS site.

Clarity for OMeGA grant recipients

OMeGA reports the portion of support for each grant to the applicable manufacturers in accordance with Centers for Medicare & Medicaid Services Open Payments reporting guidelines, providing the amount, institution name, and program director name. For clarity, we have asked companies to add the following note to their entries: "Grant made to OMeGA Medical Grants Association, an independent third-party organization which provides a transfer of value to a Covered Recipient free from donor influence."

Email info@omegamedicalgrants.org with any questions

Don't hesitate to contact us with any questions or for clarification.

12/18/20