

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 2017.

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, or development relationships. Ownership of less than 5% in a publicly traded securities and mutual funds in an orthopaedic medical device, pharmaceutical and biotechnology companies will not be considered a Financial Interest.
- have no leadership roles in orthopaedic fellowship or residency programs that may apply for a grant, recusing themselves from consideration of grant applications made by institutions with which they have been associated, currently or in the last two years. “Leadership Role” is defined to include a department chair or other position that involves financial decision making within the orthopaedic department of an institution, currently and in the previous two years.
- must 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 OMeGA Review Committee standards are similar. The one difference is in bullet 2: they may hold leadership roles though they must disclose these leadership positions they hold within their institution. 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 checked company sites for payments to our Board and Review Committee in the past, and now check the CMS Open Payment site annually. This site is intended to create a more transparent environment with information about health care providers accessible to the public though we understand that reports of payments are not necessarily an indication of improper relationships. 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.”

Board item investigation

- Dr Langdon A. Hartsock is an AO North America instructor and required to attend AO’s strategic planning meetings. (AO is a not-for-profit education and research organization.) DePuy Synthes supports AO and the “Food & Beverage” charges are indirect expenses for AO functions.
- There are 2 items listed for Dr Wayne J. Sebastianelli: Mid-Atlantic Surgical Systems education (\$158) and DJO, LLC food/beverage (\$144). These are both related to the Big Ten conference meeting at the AOSSM annual meeting.
- Dr Ruth L. Thomas received \$7.98 food/beverage from Amniox Medical.

Review Committee investigation

- Dr Hisham M. Awan's Ohio State University program received \$3,258 from Skeletal Dynamics for an industry sponsored cadaver lab conducted for orthopaedic residents and fellows.

Food & beverage

It has been a new process to remember to ask whether an event is industry funded and learn how to avoid reportable items: there is 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.

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