Pfizer MEG Announces New Model

The Pfizer Medical Education Group (MEG) is adopting a new model of grant-making that endeavors to acknowledge the synergies that can be achieved by supporting quality improvement initiatives along with continuing education for healthcare professionals. We believe that to truly have an impact we must support solutions to public health issues, help meet the educational needs of healthcare professionals and play a more direct role in support of quality improvement initiatives that close professional practice gaps and are aligned with our business interests.

Why change now?

The current MEG process is based on a system of continuing education that is in the midst of change. Accrediting and licensing bodies are moving away from a time-based credit system to a performance improvement-based system for board certification and licensure of healthcare professionals. The model of the future is that of practice change and competency, and traditional CE/CME activities will not likely be sufficient for this level of improvement to occur or to be sustained.

The Pfizer Medical Education Group fundamentally believes that adopting a new model is in the best interest of patients, healthcare professionals, health systems and Pfizer. This new model makes a strategic distinction between

1. those clinical areas where the translation of knowledge into practice is paramount to closing practice gaps and improving patient care, and
2. those where knowledge exchange around emerging science and discoveries is necessary and foundational.

Additionally, current financial constraints speak to the need for a new efficient, more effective model that allows Pfizer to make a stronger, more positive impact on the lives of patients and the healthcare system today, with less resources.

What does the new model look like?

Track 1 – Healthcare Quality Improvement & Education: Process includes the publishing of evidence-based, data driven Request for Proposals (RFPs) in key clinical areas where gaps have been identified through external entities (government agencies like NIH and CDC, academia, Medicare/Medicaid data), registries and other assessment methodologies and processes (needs assessments, gap analyses, quality indicators, etc.). Each RFP will focus on areas (clinical, geographical, methodological) where Pfizer support could potentially have the greatest impact on improved patient care and outcomes.

Based on models utilized by the National Institutes of Health (NIH) and the Robert Woods Johnson Foundation (RWJ), the new Pfizer MEG model will allow for a collaborative dialog between the Pfizer Medical Education Group and healthcare organizations regarding evidence-based need, practice gaps and innovative strategies and methodologies to help close those gaps.

Borrowing from our current model, Pfizer MEG will continue to acknowledge and embrace the value and importance of independence with respect to the content of any initiative it supports. Additionally, the implementation of External Review Panels will provide additional assurances that all proposals supported are based on sound, externally-validated evidence, and include appropriate methodologies and assessments designed to align with the clinical problems needing to be solved.

Track 2 – Annual Meetings (Emerging Science/Knowledge Exchange): Pfizer MEG will establish a mechanism whereby accredited providers of education can request funding to support LIVE activities at national conferences and congresses, recognizing the important, but limited role this type of medical education plays in disseminating new information. Clinical areas of interest and goals (based on needs data) will be published similar to the current MEG model. Eligible providers will submit a funding request through the online MEG portal. Grant thresholds will be established based on conference size/scope, the number of grant requests received by a single organization, and overall grant volume will be limited in order to manage scope with reduced resources.

Ongoing Initiatives: There will be initiatives that fall out of scope for Track 1 or Track 2, including projects that MEG has supported prior to January 1, 2012 that require ongoing oversight through completion of the project. Additionally, Pfizer supports medical education through its various alliance activities where the review process and requirements are negotiated between the two companies. Lastly, as REMS (Risk Evaluation and Mitigation Strategies) requirements evolve and include CME as a component, MEG will provide oversight, review and decision-making for all grants associated with REMS.

How does this new model differ from the current MEG model?

MEG will continue to focus its efforts on transparency, responsibility and the interests of the public through support of medical education and quality improvement initiatives. The primary difference is a shift from an unsolicited process (with few CGAs – Calls for Grants), to an RFP-driven process that enables Pfizer MEG to be more focused on areas of interest with the greatest need for quality improvement.

The new model allows Pfizer MEG experts to engage in a collaborative dialog with organizations wishing to submit a proposal for consideration. Serving as liaisons between External Review Panels and the external community. The External Review Panels are important components of the new model, since their addition will allow for the collaborative dialog described above. Ultimately, the merits and integrity of any proposal will be based on the strength of the proposal and the power of the data it is based upon. and the final decision to approve or deny will be made by the External Review Panel.

Members of the External Review Panels will consist of professionals from the medical and education communities with advanced degrees and expertise in a particular clinical area, or specific needs of a geographic region/learner groups, or expertise in CME, CE, Continuing Professional Development (CPD) or Quality Improvement. All members will have published previous works and/or proven accomplishments. Pfizer will establish a vetting process that resolves all conflicts of interest prior to engaging committee members. All appropriate legal and regulatory processes will be implemented to ensure members are acting in the best interest of patients when reviewing and approving proposals; in compliance with all internal and external policies.

For additional information, or to submit questions please contact the MEG team at:

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