

Eucomed and Ethical Collaboration



Eucomed takes a leadership role in promoting a culture of integrity and ethical business practices across the healthcare sector. It takes input from a variety of stakeholder groups to ensure that its Code of Business Practice represents the 'state-of-the-art' in ethical behaviour. Raising awareness of the need for and value to be found in instilling an ethical dimension into all aspects of the necessary collaboration between the different partners within the healthcare sector is a critical part of that role.

Eucomed also acknowledges that compliance with all applicable laws and regulations and adherence to ethical standards are both an obligation and a critical step to the achievement of its mission, which is to improve patient and clinician access to modern, innovative and reliable medical technology.

In support of these goals, Eucomed provides guiding documents that will help to ensure the high ethical standards and legal compliance of the medical technology industry. Eucomed also provides training and relevant materials that help to ensure that compliance is fully understood by all healthcare stakeholders, particularly – but not exclusively – within the industry.

While these materials support the need for ethical behaviour across the healthcare sector, it is important to understand that they do not supplant or supersede national laws or regulations or professional codes (including company codes) that may impose particular requirements upon various stakeholder groups as they engage in collaborative activities across Europe.

The Eucomed Code of Business Practice



The full text of the Code of Business Practice is available at www.eucomed.org/ethics.aspx

Additional copies of this brochure are available by contacting eucomed@eucomed.be

The Eucomed Code of Business Practice is composed of the following documents:

- The Guidelines on the Interactions with Healthcare Professionals (Sept 2008)
- The Q&A on the Eucomed Guidelines on the Interactions with Healthcare Professionals (March 2009)
- The Eucomed Guidelines on Competition Law

Eucomed represents 4500 designers, manufacturers and suppliers of medical technology used in the diagnosis, prevention, treatment and amelioration of disease and disability. Eucomed members include national trade and pan-European product associations and internationally active manufacturers of all types of medical technology. The mission of Eucomed is to improve patient and clinician access to modern, innovative and reliable medical technology.



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Setting a course for Ethical Collaboration in Healthcare

The Eucomed Code of Business Practice

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30 Years Saving Lives...
Improving the Quality of Life



The Urgency of Ethical Collaboration



Today, the costs associated with the well-being of populations across Europe are escalating and there is increased pressure on healthcare budgets. Difficult choices are being – and will be – made about public spending. In this context, the legitimacy of the interactions between different healthcare stakeholders is vital if we are to continue to make the case that the health of our citizens is a fundamental barometer of their wealth.

Collaboration and partnership between hospitals, clinicians, nurses and other Healthcare Professionals and the industry has a long tradition. This collaboration has been a critical factor in the history of medical innovation and remains important today – and in the future – if we are to maintain that record.

Research and development are at the heart of innovation in the medical technology sector, as are education and training. Both aspects are key to ensuring the safe, efficient delivery of innovative medical technology to the people that really matter – patients. This requires a deep level of trust and collaboration between Healthcare Professionals on the one hand and those organisations that provide the tools they need to deliver effective patient care on the other.

Ethical conduct between all parties is therefore essential to ensure that the nature of that collaboration is beyond reproach. This is true in terms of both the transparency of the interactions between different stakeholders and of being seen to be mutually responsible with public funds. In a sector which increasingly operates across national and cultural boundaries, it is also important to establish a consistent pan-European framework for collaboration.

A culture of integrity and transparency in the interactions between all partners in the healthcare sector across Europe is fundamental to ensuring that our profession is beyond reproach and that we can continue to represent the best interests of the general public.

The Meaning of Ethical Collaboration



As the voice of the medical technology industry in Europe and an organisation committed to helping to uphold the integrity of the industry – and, where possible, the medical profession overall – Eucomed has developed a detailed Code of Business Practice that clearly illustrates the 'rules of engagement' between different stakeholders.

Ensuring that the collaboration between partners in the healthcare sector can never be called into question involves implementing ethical behaviours in the day-to-day interactions between stakeholders.

The Eucomed Code of Business Practice supports the adoption of ethical behaviours by providing a clear framework for assessing the appropriateness – or otherwise – of the collaboration between the medical industry and Healthcare Professionals. This framework is illustrated with examples of appropriate behaviours and offers concrete, practical guidance on all interactions between different stakeholder groups.

In addition, the Code offers best-practice guidelines on the processes to be followed and practices to be put in place in order to ensure the transparency of the collaboration between stakeholders. This ensures that all parties can demonstrate that – in every interaction – all ethical considerations were properly taken into account.

By clarifying the rules of engagement, the Eucomed Code of Business Practice helps to ensure that all interactions between different stakeholder groups are conducted according to the highest ethical and professional standards.

The Principles of Ethical Collaboration



Four mutually supportive principles form the foundation of the Eucomed Code of Business Practice. These principles should not be regarded as an 'à la carte' menu from which to select but as a set of interlinked components to be put at the heart of all interactions between the medical industry and Healthcare Professionals.

- The first principle of **Separation** fulfils the need for all stakeholders to transparently uphold a Healthcare Professional's obligation to make independent decisions regarding treatment. This principle ensures that conflicts of interest do not arise by clearly differentiating between commercial interactions – those relating to sales and purchasing – and the many other different interactions between Healthcare Professionals and the medical industry - including research, necessary product education and other types of training.
- The principle of **Transparency** describes the steps to be taken to ensure interactions between different stakeholders are consistent with European and local law. It also covers the processes necessary to ensure that all parties can demonstrate that any collaboration is conducted in an ethical manner.
- The principle of **Equivalence** relates to the remuneration terms for any service that a Healthcare Professional might perform and aims to ensure that a fair market value is paid for such services.
- Finally, the principle of **Documentation** governs any agreement between two different parties and requires that supporting documents be available which can substantiate the integrity of the collaboration.

Overall, these four key principles help to ensure that the interactions between different stakeholder groups within the medical sector – necessary to secure the continual improvement of patient care – are ethical, legal and mutually respectful.

