



November 30, 2010

Dear Colleagues,

The International Board of Lactation Consultant Examiners (IBLCE) is the global authority that determines the competence of practitioners in lactation and breastfeeding care and is celebrating its 25<sup>th</sup> year in 2010. More than 21,000 individuals are certified by IBLCE internationally. The National Commission for Certifying Agencies (NCCA) has continuously accredited IBLCE since 1988. NCCA guidelines require that certification organizations be administratively, financially, and corporately independent. As such it is imperative IBLCE have a position statement regarding the standards of interaction with industry so the organization and the individuals certified by IBLCE have guidelines regarding best practice.

IBLCE believes every interaction with industry at both the organizational and personal level must be free from undue influence and also the perception of undue influence. In order to accomplish the vision of IBLCE of advancing the health and well being of mothers and children worldwide, safeguards must be in place in order to protect and maintain public faith on an organizational and individual level. It is imperative IBLCE have a clear and strong statement regarding the standards of interaction with industry so the organization and the individuals certified by IBLCE have guidelines regarding best practice.

The issue of interactions with the for-profit health sector is not new for IBLCE. In 1981 the World Health Organization Presented the International Code of Marketing of Breast-Milk Substitutes and article 7 of this Code specifically addresses health care workers. IBLCE is not alone in striving to define the appropriate relationship with industry. The Council of Medical Specialty Societies (CMSS) has developed a document containing guiding principles, titled "Code for Interaction with Companies" (hereafter referred to as Code, [www.cmss.org](http://www.cmss.org)). This Code is based on independence and transparency in all interactions with companies, which IBLCE completely supports. On November 8<sup>th</sup>, 2010 the IBLCE Board of Directors unanimously voted to support the Code. The CMSS Board of Directors has approved IBLCE request to become a Non-Member Society Formal Signer of the Code.

On an organizational and personal level the Code will guide IBLCE policy and action under all circumstances. For example, continuing education credits will only be awarded to education programs that comply with this Code. In practical terms, IBLCE will ensure that all organizational policy and procedures, leaders, staff, contractors, and volunteers are in compliance with the CMSS Code. While organizational compliance is mandatory, IBLCE recognizes individual IBCLC compliance is voluntary, self-regulated and yet vital to maintain the highest level of professional integrity and public trust.

As Chair of the IBLCE I present to you the Council of Medical Specialty Societies Code for Interactions with Companies. The IBLCE is fully supportive of the Code in its entirety and we solicit your participation in this vital and urgent matter to restore credibility, accountability and public trust in healthcare.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "E. McIntyre". The signature is written in a cursive style with a large, looped initial "E".

Ellen McIntyre OAM, PhD, IBCLC  
Board Chair