



Communications Brief

Topic: Changes to Attendance Policies at Promotional Dinners

Date: August 30, 2012

Massachusetts Revises Law on Gifts to Medical Providers

Practitioners licensed in Massachusetts, including nurses, may now attend promotional dinners or other promotional programming that includes meals or beverages. Massachusetts Gov. Deval Patrick has signed a revision of the state's law prohibiting medical device and drug firms from offering gifts to medical providers. The revisions, part of the state's budget bill, permit manufacturers to provide "modest meals and refreshments" during presentations intended to inform providers on new medical products. Massachusetts licensees, and all other practitioners, should nevertheless know and abide by their own employers' rules regarding such programs.

Letter from Veteran's Administration (VA) Outlines Attendance Policy Allowances

ONS:Edge has received a letter from the Department of Veteran Affairs Regional Council 2, Florida District, that asserts: "When there has been a determination that attendance of a VA employee is in the interest of the agency because it will further agency programs and operations, an employee may accept an unsolicited gift of free attendance at all or appropriate parts of a widely attended gathering of mutual interest to a number of parties from the sponsor of the event...Attendance may include waiver of all or part of a conference or other fee or the provision of food, refreshments, entertainment, instruction and material furnished to all attendees as integral part of the event. It does not include travel expenses, lodgings" or other items listed in the letter. The VA letter can be downloaded at www.onsedge.com. VA employees should check with their supervisors, but may attend approved promotional events.

ONS:Edge Important Considerations:

There appears to be an easing of attendance regulations for promotional events in these two instances. However, ONS:Edge will continue to enforce the rules established by our clients' legal departments regarding who can be admitted to promotional dinner programs and/or served meals.

Additionally, it is important that all healthcare professionals attending promotional programs check their employer's policies regarding attendance. Many research and teaching hospitals post policies online and employees should contact their human resources departments for information.