

EpiNet Code of Sponsorship

1 INTRODUCTION

The **EpiNet** Study Group comprises a group of epileptologists and neurologists with an interest in epilepsy who intend to use the Internet to undertake research into the clinical management of epilepsy. For this purpose, the **EpiNet** Study Group has constructed a secure international database, with the goal of running multicentre cohort studies and large, simple, randomised controlled trials. Trials will be investigator-initiated and independent of pharmaceutical companies.

EpiNet operates under the auspices of the Auckland DHB Charitable Trust, a registered charity in New Zealand. **EpiNet's** activities are consistent with the Trust's general charitable purposes.

Industry sponsorship is a major source of funding for medical research in human disease. Sponsorship needs to be distinguished from manufacturers' paying directly for clinical trials of their products.

Sponsorship differs from advertising with respect to its objectives. Sponsorship benefits the **EpiNet** project, people with epilepsy, and the general public by making possible activities related to the study of epilepsy which might not have been feasible otherwise. Successful sponsorship therefore benefits all concerned parties.

The **EpiNet** code of sponsorship has the intention of setting down basic principles and guidelines for good practice and fairness in sponsorship, so that sponsorship may play its proper role in the best interests of the **EpiNet** project, people with epilepsy, and sponsors.

2 SPONSORSHIP OPPORTUNITIES

Any person or organisation may provide sponsorship by a general donation in the form of an "unrestricted gift" to contribute to the operating costs of **EpiNet** and its various projects. These payments will be tax deductible.

3 SCOPE OF THE CODE

This Code applies to all sponsorship received by **EpiNet** related to projects, products, services, activities or events of any kind.

4 BASIC PRINCIPLES

- A. All sponsorship should be honest, truthful and legal.
- B. The terms and conduct of sponsorship should be based upon principles of fairness and good faith between all parties to the sponsorship.

C. Sponsorship should be acknowledged and should not be misleading.

D. All categories of sponsors who are legally allowed to conduct business are free to sponsor any activity, event or program of the **EpiNet** project and to define a set of sponsorship objectives, provided that such a sponsorship is consistent with the principles of fairness and good faith set out in this Code.

E. All sponsorship should be accompanied by a written agreement.

5 RULES

5.1 Clarity and Accuracy

Sponsorship should be transparent and all related communication accurate with respect to all persons and organisations taking part in the sponsorship, and to any rights or other privileges granted to the sponsor.

5.2 Autonomy and self-determination

Sponsors will be required to respect the autonomy and self-determination of **EpiNet** in the management of its own activities and properties, provided that **EpiNet** fulfils the objectives set out in the sponsorship agreement.

5.3 Product promotion

EpiNet will not engage in any direct or indirect product promotion on behalf of any sponsor.

EpiNet will not endorse particular products or services or service providers as part of sponsorship arrangements.

5.4 Disclosure

All sponsorship shall be fully disclosed in public documentation detailing sponsorship agreements and agreed objectives. It is anticipated that all such documentation will be displayed on a public website.

5.5 General responsibilities of Parties to the Sponsorship

The sponsor should take particular care to safeguard the identity, dignity and reputation of **EpiNet**.

EpiNet will never obscure, deform or impugn the image or trademarks of the sponsor nor should it jeopardise the goodwill or public appreciation these have already earned.

5.6 The Sponsorship Audience or Project Participants

The project participants or audience should be clearly informed of the existence and source of a sponsorship with respect to a particular event, activity, program or person.

5.7 Multiple Sponsorship

The **EpiNet** Study Group will not enter exclusive arrangements with sponsors. The **EpiNet** Study Group reserves the right to accept a new sponsor for its activities without the approval of existing sponsors.

The **EpiNet** Study Group is aware of the importance of keeping an appropriate balance between sponsors.

Each member of a pool of sponsors should scrupulously respect the contribution of each sponsor.

5.8 Advertising rights of sponsors

Sponsors may advertise their contribution to **EpiNet** or specific projects controlled by **EpiNet** in any promotional material, subject to prior review and approval of the proposed advertising or promotional material by the steering committee of the **EpiNet** Study Group.