



# CANADIAN CONSENSUS FRAMEWORK FOR ETHICAL COLLABORATION



## OUR COLLECTIVE SOLUTION

Leading Canadian health organizations developed the Canadian Consensus Framework for Ethical Collaboration to create a set of ethical standards to guide collaboration among patient organizations, health care professionals and the pharmaceutical industry. The Framework sets out four overarching principles:

- Ensures patients' best interests are at the core of our activities;
- Promotes transparent and accountable conduct;
- Sets clear rules on gifts, funding and conferences, continuing health education and clinical research; and
- Guides National Ethical leadership

## OUR ANTICIPATED OUTCOMES

The Framework aims to:

- Enhance credibility and encourage better dialogue, trust, and respect between patient organizations, health care professionals and the pharmaceutical industry;
- Increase public confidence in health care professionals, institutions, the health care system and the pharmaceutical industry; and
- Create an environment for patient organizations, health care professionals and industry to have authentic discussions about improving health care and patient outcomes.

## CONTEXT

In January 2014, five global health care organizations established a Consensus Framework for Ethical Collaboration to support partnerships that aim to deliver greater patient benefits and support high quality patient care. The five organizations are the International Alliance of Patients' Organizations (IAPO), the International Council of Nurses (ICN), the International Federation of Pharmaceutical Manufacturers and Associations (IFPMA), the International Pharmaceutical Federation (FIP), and the World Medical Association (WMA).

Likewise, Canadians expect that patient organizations, health care professionals and the pharmaceutical industry will adhere to the highest ethical standards.

Collaboration between patient organizations, health care professionals and the pharmaceutical industry is essential and increasingly important to health care delivery and research. Canadians need to be assured that there are clear and transparent rules that strengthen collaboration and partnerships in education, clinical practice and research.

We believe that breaking down silos and strengthening the relationships between partners will maximize patient health care and promote better health outcomes.

## A COMMITMENT TO PATIENTS

We believe patients should be the priority for Canadian patient organizations, health care professionals and the pharmaceutical industry. Through collaboration and partnerships, we will work to advance health care and improve outcomes for Canadians.

**Patients First** – The health and safety of patients is our first priority. We are working together to ensure patients' best interests are at the core of our activities.

**Collaboration and Partnerships** – We are committed to collaboration that inspires trust, is transparent and that aims to deliver greater benefits and services to patients.

**Accountability** – We operate and practice according to the values and responsibilities of our respective codes of ethics, in order to preserve high professional standards and uphold the integrity of our organizations, professions and communities. We avoid any activity that creates a conflict of interest or violates laws and regulations.

## RESEARCH, INNOVATION AND KNOWLEDGE TRANSLATION

We believe that effective collaboration between patient organizations, health care professionals, including researchers and the pharmaceutical industry will drive health care innovation and generate improved health care and outcomes.

**Clinical Research and Trials** – Clinical research and trials must be conducted with the intent to develop and further scientific knowledge to the benefit of Canadians and for the advancement of health sciences and patient care. Research activities must be transparent, ethically defensible, socially responsible, and scientifically valid. The researcher's primary responsibility is to the patient. A duly constituted research or clinical trial ethics board must review and approve all research in advance, according to organizational policies.

**Continuing Health Education** – Continuing health education helps keep health care professionals, researchers and community leaders abreast of the latest health care practices, sharpens their skills, and increases their knowledge and understanding. Health care professionals commit to the maintenance of a high standard of professional competence throughout their career, through unbiased continuing education and professional development.

**Health Care conferences** – We have an important role to play in educating and assessing developments in health education, research, policy, administration, health sciences, and clinical practice. Health care professionals regularly participate in health care conferences and should not benefit individually from stakeholders or sponsors of the events. Sponsorship should not include hospitality or other arrangements for personal guests or spouses of attendees or faculty.

## RELATIONSHIPS AND CONDUCT

We believe that collaborative relationships are essential to sharing and disseminating knowledge and best practices. Working together, we work to develop clear rules that build trust and strengthen collaboration in training, research, and community support.

**Personal Gifts** – Industry representatives will not give, nor will health care professionals accept, any payments or inducements that are unlawful or improper including, but not limited to, personal gifts. They will not ask for or accept gifts, inducements, or hospitality that may affect, or be perceived to affect, professional judgment.

**Funding and Support** – Pursuit of funding, sponsorship and other types of project support is at times necessary to advance organizational, professional or health care objectives. Patient organizations and health care professionals seeking or receiving funds must ensure that funding arrangements or relationships with funders do not influence or jeopardize the mission, goals, and advocacy activities of their respective organizations and professions. When seeking funds on behalf of an organization, we must act fairly, ethically and with integrity, in accordance with all applicable laws, regulations and standards of practice, and must disclose any conflict of interest or conflict of duty. We must not accept support, such as donations or contributions, for purposes that are inconsistent with our individual organization's mission. Patient organization and health professional support must not be linked to corporate endorsement or product promotion, and health professionals must not conduct seminars and other events for the purposes of peer selling on behalf of a pharmaceutical or medical device manufacturer or service provider. All support must be arranged through clear and transparent written agreements.

## IMPLEMENTATION AND ACCOUNTABILITY

We may continue to develop our own codes and principles for ethical collaboration and ensure their implementation. Systems to educate our members and to report and act on breaches should be established to support ethical standards and ensure accountability both at the organizational and individual levels.

This Framework is endorsed by the Best Medicines Coalition, Health Charities Coalition of Canada, the Canadian Medical Association, the Canadian Nurses Association, the Canadian Pharmacists Association and Innovative Medicines Canada. All groups have a mutual interest in ensuring that the relationships between patients, health care professionals and the pharmaceutical sector are based on ethical and responsible decisions. The Framework is a living document and other organizations working in the patient community, life sciences sector and health care delivery are welcome to endorse it.