

Engaging with Health Consumer Organisations (HCOs) Roche Australia (Pharmaceuticals) Policy Position

Summary

- Roche is committed to collaborating with Health Consumer Organisations (HCOs) to improve patient health outcomes and the quality use of medicines.
- Roche focuses on building long-term working relationships, based on a common set of values of integrity, maintenance of independence, respect, equity, transparency and mutual benefit.
- Roche applies consistently high standards of conduct in all interactions with HCOs.
- Each year, Roche publishes a list of HCOs to which it provides financial support and/or significant non-financial support, in accordance with industry guidelines.

Background

Pharmaceutical companies are increasingly partnering with health consumer organisations (HCOs, also known as patient support or advocacy groups) on projects ranging from disease awareness campaigns to clinical trial design and discussions around access to treatments. There is a growing community expectation of integrity and transparency in terms of how the industry interacts with these groups, including the provision of financial and in-kind support.

HCOs are not-for-profit organisations that represent the interests and views of healthcare consumers. They range from small volunteer groups to large organisations and generally promote views that are independent of government, the pharmaceutical industry and professional health service providers. HCOs provide patients with support and information on how to manage their disease or condition, represent patient views and advocate for change on issues that affect patients' lives. Some deliver vital feedback concerning the causes and potential treatments for specific conditions. HCOs also play a crucial role in safeguarding the rights of patients.

The *Working Together Guide*, developed by the Consumers Health Forum of Australia and Medicines Australia, provides HCOs and pharmaceutical companies with a roadmap that can help to achieve the best outcomes for health consumers, carers and their families.

Roche position

Roche believes that an open dialogue and transparent exchange of information among all the stakeholders in the healthcare community is vital to advancing access and delivery of appropriate healthcare to patients. The company is committed to collaborating with HCOs – we share an

interest in managing diseases to improve health and quality of life, as well as the quality use of medicines. Roche is proud of its history of working with HCOs and is committed to applying the principles of the *Working Together Guide* and Roche global guidelines to ensure our relationships with HCOs reflect common values of honesty, integrity, trust, respect, maintenance of independence, equity, transparency and mutual benefit. We focus on building and sustaining long-term working relationships.

HCOs are collaborated with on projects such as disease awareness, information sharing, education, capacity building and advocacy. Interacting with HCOs enables Roche to learn about unmet patient needs; such valuable information guides us in the development of medicines, as well as education and support activities. Our aim is to support the voice of patients and to foster a constructive healthcare discussion to benefit all stakeholders.

Applying consistently high standards of conduct in all interactions is paramount to the way Roche conducts itself with stakeholders. Information provided to HCOs must be balanced, accurate, educational and non-promotional. It is made clear that any support provided is not intended to compromise or interfere with patient treatment decisions.

All financial support, and/or significant non-financial support provided by Roche to an HCO is covered by a written agreement. Roche discloses on its website each year the names of Australian HCOs that have received funding or significant non-financial support from Roche as well as those HCOs that Roche has engaged to provide significant contracted services, in line with industry guidelines.

Further reference

Roche working with patient groups - Good practice guidelines (Global guidelines)

This position paper was adopted by the Roche Australia (Pharmaceuticals) Leadership Team on 5 October 2016 and entered into force the same day.