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The Federation of Obstetric & Gynaecological Societies of India

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Date: 24 August 2023

To,
Shri Mansukh Mandaviya
Honourable Minister,
Ministry of Health and Family Welfare,
Government of India
New Delhi

Subject: Request regarding National Medical Commission (NMC) Registered Medical Practitioner (Professional Conduct) Regulations, 2023.

Respected Sir,

We are writing to you on behalf of the Federation of Obstetric and Gynaecological Societies of India (FOGSI) which is a professional organization of Obstetricians and Gynaecologists of our country. FOGSI has 266 member societies based in various cities and towns of India and we are a force of 40000 plus professionals. These health professionals are involved in delivering healthcare to women at all levels of the healthcare system from the primary health centers to the apex tertiary institutes and medical colleges.

FOGSI has played an active role in the reduction of maternal mortality in the country and have been proud partners of the government in bringing it down over the last two decades from 500 to 97 per 100000 live births. We have been involved with training of doctors and healthcare providers in public and private settings. From the days of Emergency Obstetric Care (EMOC) training in the 1990s to date, FOGSI has played its part in public private partnerships being a strong technical lead and an ardent advocate for women's health. FOGSI has been a part of various projects across women's life cycles and some of these are mentioned in the appendix.

We are writing to you regarding the National Medical Commission (NMC) Registered Medical Practitioner (Professional Conduct) Regulations, 2023 gazetted on 02 August 2023 vide **No. R-12013/01/2022/Ethics**.

In particular, we would like to draw your attention to clause 35 which states:

RMPs and their families must not receive any gifts, travel facilities, hospitality, cash or monetary grants, consultancy fee or honorariums, or access to entertainment or recreation from pharmaceutical companies or their representatives, commercial healthcare establishments, medical

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device companies, or corporate hospitals under any pretext. However, this does not include salaries and benefits that RMPs may receive as employees of these organizations. Also, RMPs should not be involved in any third-party educational activity like CPD, seminar, workshop, symposia, conference, etc., which involves direct or indirect sponsorships from pharmaceutical companies or the allied health sector. RMP should be aware of the conflict-of-interest situations that may arise. The nature of these relationships should be in the public domain such as clinical drug trials and should not be in contravention of any law, rule, or regulation in force. RMP himself or as part of any society, organization, association, trust, etc. make regarding the relationship with the pharmaceutical and allied health sector industry clear and transparent open to scrutiny. (L3)

We would like to emphasize the importance of continued medical education (CME) activities in the enhancement of knowledge and expertise in modern clinical practice. A number of new disease entities and new approaches to their treatment are continuously being developed. CME activities and workshops are useful in skill enhancement and improving the competence of care providers in delivering high quality health care. CMEs and conferences are an opportunity for health professionals to exchange ideas and thoughts which ultimately result in improvement of health outcomes for women. The roll out of this knowledge directly impacts maternal and neonatal outcomes and broadly, women's health.

CME activities and conferences are being conducted under the aegis of professional organizations and not on an individual basis. These CME activities are supported by pharmaceutical companies. Funds are generated in the form of educational grants and as fees for stalls in the scientific exhibitions of CMEs and conferences. These funds are used not only for the conduct of CMEs but also in a number of public health activities (awareness programs, public health check-up and screening camps) that professional organizations such as FOGSI undertake.

We therefore seek your intervention to consider the following modifications to the rules:

1. Pharmaceutical companies and allied health care industry should be allowed to financially support CME activities and conferences conducted by professional organizations such as FOGSI, and other local, state and national medical organizations.
2. The financial support should be to professional organizations and not to individual RMPs.
3. Professional organizations should have the discretion to use these funds to conduct research, training programs, public health activities, advocacy programs, and public awareness programs.

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All financial transactions from pharmaceutical companies have been made in an open and transparent manner. FOGSI has been functioning with the highest ethical standards and will continue to do so.

We seek your urgent intervention on this front and request you to give us an appointment to meet you at the earliest to further discuss this issue.

Sincerely,

HDPai

Dr Hrishikesh Pai
President
FOGSI

M.A. Patel

Dr Madhuri Patel
Secretary General
FOGSI

CC :

PMO Office
Smt Dr Bharti Pawar, Minister of State, Ministry of Health and Family Welfare
Shri Rajesh Bhushan, Secretary, Ministry of Health and Family Welfare



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Appendix

The Federation of Obstetric and Gynaecological Societies of India (FOGSI) has been a partner of the Government of India and has been instrumental in implementing the entire spectrum of RMNCH-A (Reproductive, Maternity and Neonatal Child Health and Adolescents) health activities. Over the last two decades, the following participation from FOGSI has been particularly noteworthy:

Reduction in Maternal Mortality

- Active involvement in the **Pradhan Mantri Surakshit Matrutva Abhiyan (PMSMA)** – thousands of FOGSI members have volunteered their time from private practice to provide free antenatal care.
- **Anemia Mukh Bharat** – FOGSI members have been at the forefront of raising public awareness, conducting screening camps and advocating for eliminating anemia. This has directly affected maternal survival positively.

Improving Maternal and Neonatal Health Quality

- Providing technical inputs for setting standards for maternity and newborn care in the **LAQSHYA MANYATA** program in public and private health facilities.
- FOGSI members are active and participate regularly in Maternal Death Surveillance and Response (**MDSR**) and Stillbirth Board meetings at the district, state and national levels.
- FOGSI leadership is engaged with the Society of Midwives of India (SOMI) to expand the workforce delivery maternity services in our country.
- A number of activities such as the **NARI SWASTHYA PAHEL** have been conducted by FOGSI to engage with the GOI in improving women's health care and maternal health.

Beti Bachao, Beti Padhao Program

- FOGSI members have advocated for the girl child at all national and international forums
- FOGSI members are a part of the PCPNDT Board and regularly participate in NIMC visits
- **Dheera** – Say No to Violence Against Women Program is a strong movement by FOGSI against this social problem

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Family Welfare and Reproductive Health

- FOGSI WHO RAC Project with support from the MOHFW, GOI on respectful abortion care has been an important intervention in improving quality of abortion care and reducing mortality from abortions.
- FOGSI has championed the rights of women and has played an important role in the promulgation of the MTP Act Amendments 2021.
- FOGSI member are leading technical advisors and advocates of new contraceptive technology, the latest being Implanon.
- FOGSI is working with the Cancer Foundation of India (CFI) for the implementation of the cervical cancer vaccine program and elimination of cervical cancer in India.