

**ZEVA meeting  
Bratislava, 25 September 2014**



## Sponsoring of Continuing Medical Education in Germany

# Physicians' self-governance in Germany

## State Chambers of Physicians



- Compulsory membership -

### Public role:

- Professional code and supervision of the profession
- Specialty training
- Certification of training
- Continuing medical education
- Quality assurance
- Registration

### Professional representation:

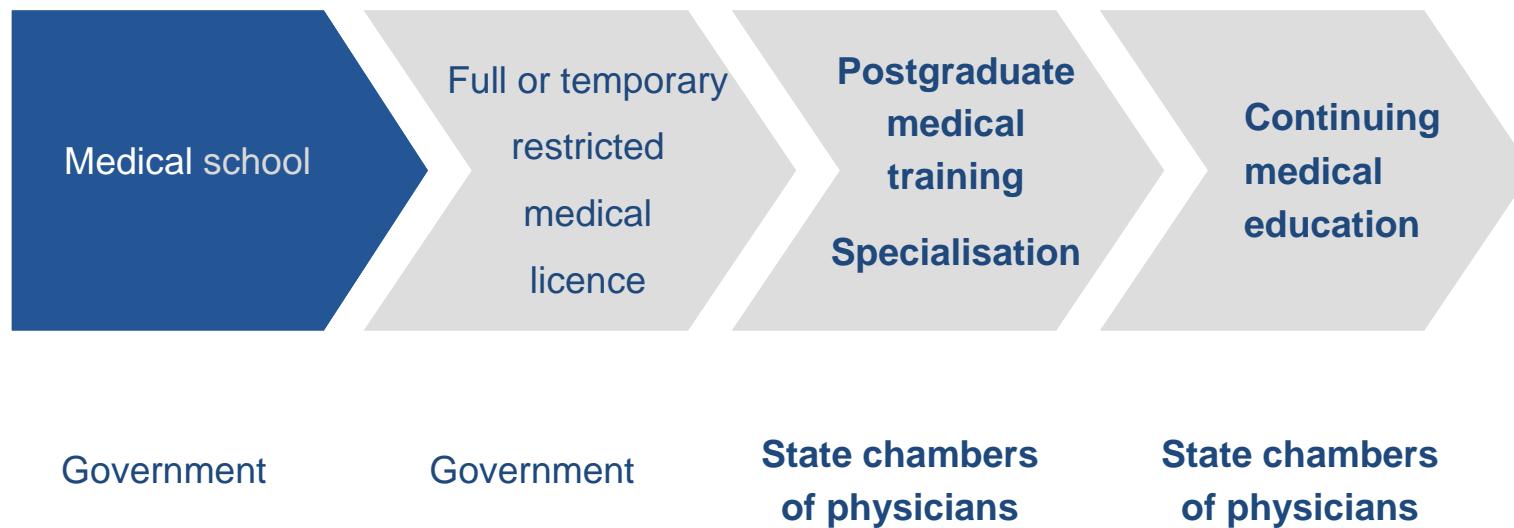
- Representation in politics & the media
- Expert reports
- Support of public health services
- Publication of a press organ
- Cooperate with international partners
- Collaboration with health organizations

### Social role:

- Pension schemes

# Physicians' self-governance

## Medical licensing, specialty training and CME



# Physicians' self-governance

## Continuing Medical Education



- § 95d German Social Code V (Sozialgesetzbuch V) changed in 2004
- § 4 professional code:
  - Physicians are obliged to engage in continuing medical education to the extent necessary to maintain and develop the competence required in practising their profession
- No revalidation or recertification!
- 250 credit points over course of 5 years
- Responsibility of chambers of physicians
- Accreditation of CME/CPD events by chambers, points granted depending on format and duration of CME event
- Recognition of certificates from EU and non-EU countries

# Sponsoring of Continuing Medical Education in Germany

## Continuing Medical Education



- The German Medical Association mediates the exchange of opinions and activities between the state chambers of physicians
  
- The GMA coordinates their goals and works towards the most uniform possible regulation of all activities in the different regions:
  - Model Regulations on Continuing Medical Education
  - Recommendations on CME
  
- The State Chambers of Physicians in the federal states (Länder) are free to adopt the regulations

# Sponsoring of Continuing Medical Education in Germany

## Continuing Medical Education



- Current Model Regulations have been amended by the German Medical Assembly in 2013
  - Objective, content, methods and promotion of CME and certificates of the State Chamber of Physicians
  - Rating of CME Measures (basic unit and categories)
  - Recognition of CME measures, its prerequisites and recognition procedure
  - Recognition of CME Organisers
  - Mutual recognition of CME measures
  - CME abroad

# Sponsoring of Continuing Medical Education in Germany

## Continuing Medical Education: Sponsoring



- § 30- 33 Model Professional Code: Safeguarding of Medical Independence in Cooperation with Third parties (§ 32 “Impermissible Donations”)
- Model Regulation on CME:
  - “The contents are free from economic interests and organisers and speakers disclose any conflicts of interest.”
- Sponsoring is defined as a performance bound to a counter-performance of the sponsored
- Sponsoring of CME events is permitted if certain requirements are fulfilled
- State Chamber of Lower Saxony is the only German chamber which does not permit sponsoring of CME events

# Sponsoring of Continuing Medical Education in Germany

## Continuing Medical Education



- Recommendations of the GMA of 2007
  - Sponsoring must be transparent
  - The sponsor may not influence the form and content of the continuing education measure
  - Speakers must disclose their connections with industry
  - The scientific managers of CME events ensure product-neutrality



# Sponsoring of Continuing Medical Education in Germany

## Continuing Medical Education



- Product advertising on the invitations and programmes of single-subject CME events is fundamentally not permissible; there are no objections to the advertising of several products by several manufacturers in the programmes of multi-subject events (conferences). The naming of sponsors is permissible
- Object product information based on scientific criteria is permissible if the active ingredient (generic) is indicated instead of the product name, e.g. by the pharmaceutical industry
- All CME measures must communicate a balanced overview of the respective status of knowledge relating to corresponding diagnostic and therapeutic alternatives

# Sponsoring of Continuing Medical Education in Germany

## Continuing Medical Education



- Commercial exhibitions with a temporal or spatial link to CME measures may influence neither the concept nor the implementation of the actual CME measures
- A commercially backed accompanying programme may neither take place at the same time as the conference programme, nor may it last longer than the CME event itself
- The professional code of the respective state chambers of physicians regulate if accepting benefits in kind for attendance at scientific CME events is admissible.

# Sponsoring of Continuing Medical Education in Germany

## Continuing Medical Education



### Supplementary recommendations for written or audiovisual media

- Product advertising is not permissible in recognised media-based CME modules; the sponsors of the publication and/or the operator of the website may be named
- Processing of online CME modules by the participants may not be disturbed by banners, pop-ups or similar electronic applications
- The linking of CME modules to commercial websites is not permissible

# Sponsoring of Continuing Medical Education in Germany

## Continuing Medical Education



- Voluntary self-regulation of the pharmaceutical industry 2004/2014
- More recently, discussion on sponsoring of CME or not

### **CONCLUSION**

- Continuing education as a life-long learning process is a professional duty of physicians
- Owing to the prevailing structures, fulfilment of this duty makes cooperation between the medical community and third parties necessary and desirable in many areas
- Content of continuing medical training must be kept independent of financial interest of third parties and free of commercial influence on diagnosis and therapy in hospitals and private practice.



Thank you for your attention!