



The Miami Herald > News > Breaking News

Breaking News

Logout Member Center

Current: 85°
92° / 76°
[Complete Forecast](#)

HOME DELIVERY
Sunday's
Miami Herald
6 Months for \$20!

Miami-Dade | Broward | Florida | Legislature | Americas | Cuba | Nation | World | Politics | Action Line | Obituaries

Posted on Tuesday, 06.16.09



share email print comment reprint

The Miami Herald Web Search powered by YAHOO!

Search

Group rates Florida medical schools' ties to pharmaceutical firms

BY JOHN DORSCHNER
JDORSCHNER@MIAMIHERALD.COM

The University of Florida medical school received an F and the University of Miami a B on a scorecard designed to measure ethical policies concerning professors' relationship with the pharmaceutical industry, the Pew Prescription Project announced Tuesday.

The Gainesville school received the grade because it refused to provide information to the 2009 American Medical Student Association PharmFree Scorecard.

Nova Southeastern's College of Osteopathic Medicine got a D, Florida State a B and the University of South Florida a C on the AMSA PharmFree Scorecard.

UM Dean Pascal Goldschmidt said the medical school has tightened up its policy since the Scorecard staff did its research. "There has been greed and abuse in the way pharmaceutical companies work, but we can't afford to throw everything away with the bath water.

"The relationship between medical schools and the companies is extraordinarily important. Research with drugs has saved stopped 500,000 cardiac deaths. So we need to find a way to have a healthy, beneficial relationship with the industry," Goldschmidt said.

The Scorecard report -- available at www.amsascorecard.org -- includes categories measuring policies for gifts and meals from industry to doctors, paid promotional speaking for industry, acceptance of free drug samples, interaction with sales representatives and industry-funded education.

For UM Miller School of Medicine, the scorecard said there are "strong, clearly organized policies on individual conflicts of interest. These policies could be made stronger with a complete ban on gifts, tighter restrictions on samples and a stronger firewall between industry funding and on-site educational activities."

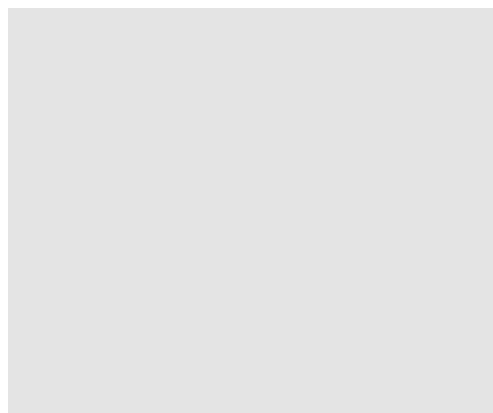
The scorecard said UM's limits on meals 'may not significantly curb on-site or off-site [restaurant] meals. Provisions to be occasional, informational and 'modest by local standards' are not significant disincentives for meals."

Goldschmidt said that since that Scorecard research was done, the policy was changed to ban all gifts and meals.

The report praised UM for "exemplary language" in its ethics on consulting relationships. "This policy requires a formal contract for all consulting relationships, including the nature of services to be rendered and the amount of compensation for those services, which must be reasonable. Importantly, all such arrangements must be approved by the department chair or the dean."

The scorecard also praised UM for "a strong policy which requires employees to recuse themselves from purchasing decisions when either they or a close relation (family member, partner, close personal friend) have a financial interest in the business being considered. However, the policy does allow these same individuals to contribute to discussions surrounding the decision (without taking part in the actual vote), which risks undue influence on the outcome."

The Scorecard said Nova has "workable gifts policy and thorough oversight and compliance framework, but fails to address most other domains, including site access, consulting/speaking relationships, on- and



MORE BREAKING NEWS

- Woman's body reportedly found in New River
- Fuel costs, swine flu pose problems for Carnival Corp.
- Lauderhill, Pembroke Pines plan sobriety checkpoints

More



Enter Keyword(s)

Enter City

Select a State

- All United States -

off-site education, and disclosure of financial relationships."

Over the past year, there have been repeated stories in the national press about doctors writing papers in favor of certain drugs after receiving unpublicized payments for speaking or consulting fees from the firms they're promoting.

The Scorecard, released Tuesday, gives an A or B to 45 of 149 medical schools.

[recommend](#)

[email](#)

[print](#)

[share](#)

[buzz up!](#)

Join the discussion

The Miami Herald is pleased to provide this opportunity to share information, experiences and observations about what's in the news. Some of the comments may be reprinted elsewhere in the site or in the newspaper. We encourage lively, open debate on the issues of the day, and ask that you refrain from profanity, hate speech, personal comments and remarks that are off point. In order to post comments, you must be a registered user of MiamiHerald.com. Your username will show along with the comments you post. Thank you for taking the time to offer your thoughts.

Comments (0)

Select a Category

— All Job Categories —

Search

Advanced Job Search

Search by Category

powered by **careerbuilder.com**

[RSS](#) | [MY!](#) My Yahoo | [Newsletters](#) | [Widgets](#) | [Mobile](#) | [Alerts](#) | [Twitter](#)

[About The Miami Herald](#) | [About the McClatchy Company](#) | [Terms of Use & Privacy Statement](#) | [Corrections](#) | [Contact Us](#) | [Advertise](#)

Partners: [El Nuevo Herald](#) | [Newspaper in Education](#) | [WLRN](#) | [Miami Herald News](#) | [CBS4 WFOR-TV](#) | [More](#)

Copyright 2009 Miami Herald Media Co. All rights reserved