
American Academy of Dermatology Caught In Shocking Pay-For-Play Scandal

Respected Dermatologist says “I am revolted by it;” Petitions for Meeting at Upcoming Annual Conference

WASHINGTON – A group of dermatologists, including Dr. A. Bernard Ackerman director emeritus of the Ackerman Academy of Dermatopathology in New York City, has called the American Academy of Dermatology’s (AAD) “Seal of Recognition” program a “shocking conflict of interest.” The AAD agreed to hold a special session on Monday during their annual meeting (being held this year in San Antonio) to talk about the issue—but only after a petition was circulated by their members calling for a discussion on the topic.

The AAD’s “Seal of Recognition” program, charges companies thousands of dollars for the simple “privilege” of displaying the academy’s logo on sun-protection products. Similar to a scandal involving the American Medical Association in the late 1990’s, companies must pay a \$10,000 fee per product to apply for the logo and an additional \$10,000 annual fee per product to use it.

Dr. Ackerman, as quoted in the *Dermatology Times*, is firmly against the program.

"I am revolted by it," he says. "The patient should never be used as a vehicle for self-aggrandizement by either an individual physician or an association of physicians."

Another dermatologist, Peter C. Lombardo, M.D., made similar comments to the *Times*.

"I am very much against it. I think it has no value whatsoever," he says. "The (academy) does not have an independent testing organization that tests one product against the other and finds out which deserves the Seal of Recognition. And they accept the data from whatever company is willing to pay the fee."

"This scandal is further evidence of the incestuous and unethical relationships between the dermatological community and the skin care industry," says Sarah Longwell communications director for the Indoor Tanning Association. "I'm surprised the AAD didn't learn their lesson on this issue from the American Medical Association. When will these organizations learn that trying to sell their credibility off to the highest bidder negates whatever credibility they had in the first place?"

To schedule an interview, contact Sarah Longwell at 202-420-7865. To contact the AAD's press office in San Antonio call 210-582-7020.

The Indoor Tanning Association represents thousands of indoor tanning manufacturers, distributors, facility owners and members from other support industries. The ITA promotes a responsible message about moderate tanning and sunburn prevention.