

October 20, 2009
Resolution for IAFP All Member Assembly

Subject: AAFP Partnership with Coca Cola

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WHEREAS, the AAFP announced via a press release on October 6, 2009, the Consumer Alliance, a new corporate partnership program, with its first alliance partner, the Coca Cola Company to “help provide Americans with credible information on beverages and enable consumers to make informed decisions about what they drink based on individual need” in exchange for a grant (rumored to be 600,000 dollars per year in the media), and

WHEREAS, the American Academy of Family Physicians (AAFP) Board of Directors on October 9, 2009 established a Consumer Alliance seeking alliances with the business community that help fulfill its Health of the Public strategic objective to *Assume a leadership role in health promotion, disease prevention and chronic disease management with targeted public health activities, such as smoking cessation, obesity, exercise and immunizations through increased member and patient awareness on www.FamilyDoctor.org*, and

WHEREAS, the FamilyDoctor.org is owned by the AAFP through an independent board, and receives approximately 3 million unique visitors each month, and

WHEREAS, the FamilyDoctor.org “seeks to align with businesses interested in promoting a specific product or suite of products that clearly support better health for all people” and “Products that support smoking cessation initiatives, obesity issues, fitness and exercise and better chronic disease management are highly desirable” and

WHEREAS, the AAFP Board of Directors on October 9, 2009 adopted Standards for Consumer Funding Support for AAFP Products and Activities which allow the FamilyDoctor.org to enter into Consumers Products Alliance with businesses that exemplify the principles espoused by the AAFP, and these alliances, may result in a consumer company using the phrase “Proud Partner of FamilyDoctor.org” in marketing and promotional materials, and

WHEREAS, the above Standards adopted by the AAFP Board allow termination, “...if subsequent publicity or controversy surrounding the consumer company may prove to be embarrassing or negative to AAFP” and

WHEREAS, there has been a significant negative member reaction surrounding the AAFP's above announcement of partnership with the Coca Cola Company in the AAFP and State Chapter meetings and list serves, with Family Physicians feeling embarrassed and let down due to loss of credibility with their patients and the communities they so diligently strive to serve, professional frustration since sugar added drinks (which currently constitute 75% of Coca Cola's business income) have been accepted as one of the major contributors to our obesity epidemic, and a matter of ridicule in the public media; and

WHEREAS, the manufacturers of sugar added drinks have reputations not much "healthier" than the tobacco companies among the public health community especially since their profitable products cause diseases which the family physicians are called upon to treat, frequently after irreversible damage has been done to their patients' health, and

WHEREAS, the CEO of Coca Cola Company, Mr. Muhtar Kent, has been recently quoted in the media as saying, "Americans need more exercise, not less soda", and

WHEREAS, various social networking sites are brimming with strongly negative comments such as this one on SERMO: "Are they in a race with the AMA for loss of membership?" and, "Is an alliance with tobacco companies and drug lords next", and, "This is enough reason to quit the AAFP..." and, "Can't get money from pharma because they are evil, so this is better.." and

WHEREAS, public comments from NPR Health Blog are as negative, such as, "Wow, I didn't trust doctors before...now..I can't even believe this" and "this seems like a pretty Unethical move..." and "I guess the physicians involved in this just aren't making enough money—it is absolutely amazing to me that any doctor could enter into a deal.." and

WHEREAS, a SERMO poll asked the question, "Does this alliance improve your opinion of the AAFP?" and there was not even one yes; others were divided saying no or pointing to hypocrisy in the AAFP's decision and their lowered opinion of the AAFP, and

WHEREAS, all membership organizations including the various state chapters of the AAFP are struggling to maintain their membership numbers in this tough economy, many members have expressed that the long term effectiveness and credibility of the AAFP are at stake; and that we must avoid any brand association with Coca Cola Company, even if it means increase in dues or reduction of AAFP services, be it therefore

RESOLVED, that the IAFP call upon the AAFP Board to immediately terminate its contract with Coca-Cola as part of the Consumer Alliance and notify the AAFP via an urgent communication from the IAFP president to the AAFP president along with a copy of this resolution as adopted by the IAFP All Member Assembly; and be it further

RESOLVED, that IAFP immediately share with the IAFP membership and other AAFP state chapters, a copy of this resolution as adopted calling upon the AAFP Board to immediately terminate its contract with the Coca Cola Company