



## **Membership Criteria and Code of Professional Conduct**

### **Overview:**

A strong, cohesive, and engaged membership is integral to the success of the Best Medicines Coalition, directly influencing its ability to be effective in executing patient-driven advocacy activities in support of its mission and goals. Clarification of membership criteria, as well as requirements and expectations for members, reflects a commitment to maintain and strengthen the reputation and ensure the long-term sustainability of the BMC and its members.

### **Principles:**

Our intention is that a defined membership criteria and adherence to a Code of Professional Conduct will allow the BMC to be inclusive while upholding principles of transparency, integrity, respect, and accountability.

### **Goals of Membership Criteria and Code of Professional Conduct:**

- Ensure that the BMC has an inclusive and welcoming approach to membership, is reflective of the Canadian patient community and that it has a strong, active, and engaged membership that focusses on the BMC's mission, goals, and priorities.
- Ensure that the BMC and its members are presented as credible and knowledgeable advocates for Canadian patients, particularly in dealings with key stakeholders and decision-makers, such as those in government, the media, and relevant health care organizations.
- Ensure that the BMC membership roster is varied, inclusive, and sustainable, with members who participate actively.
- Encourage a mentor/mentee environment to ensure leadership success.
- Foster a mutually supportive environment where all members are shown respect and, in turn, are respectful of BMC colleagues and their challenges, allowing all to contribute.

### **Membership Criteria:**

- The BMC includes patient organizations that support and share a commitment to the mission and goals of the BMC.
- BMC members are active, established organizations that exist as recognized entities, demonstrated by appropriate governance and credentials such as charitable or not-for-profit registration status, or Terms of Reference, or other formalized documentation.
- These groups support the mission and goals of the BMC, including in its advocacy activities and as documented in its own goals and objectives.
- These groups are either national in scope, regarding community represented, issues and activities relevant to BMC mission, or are considered a regional umbrella group for organizations engaged on relevant issues.
- For continuity, patient groups appoint up to two representatives to the BMC.

### **Application process:**

- The BMC staff will offer an orientation presentation to organizations/patient groups who are interested in membership to inform them on the BMC's mission, goals, priorities, and structure so that they can assess whether BMC membership is appropriate for them.
- The BMC requires that prospective members complete an application, and letter stating that the organization meets the above criteria and a statement confirming that they have reviewed and are in agreement with both the *Membership Criteria and Code of Professional Conduct* and the [Code of Conduct Regarding Funding](#).

- The BMC Board of Directors will review all applications in a timely manner and reach a decision based on the level of correlation and connection between the mission, goals, and activities of the prospective member and that of the BMC, as well as the applicant's ability to bring value to the BMC.

**Financial contributions:**

Financial contributions from organizations/patient group are welcome but not mandatory.

**BMC representation and communications on issues:**

Where a representative of a member organization is communicating on issues related to the BMC's scope of work, they are responsible for clarifying whether or not they are representing the coalition and its positions. Situations where policy positions are communicated include involvement in policy consultations, one-on-one or group meetings, conference presentations, public documents such as journal articles, by-lined opinion pieces, blogs, social media commentary and media interviews.

- If not formally representing the BMC and its positions, the individual is responsible for clarifying, verbally or in writing as appropriate, that views expressed are their own and not necessarily the positions of organizations with which they are affiliated, including the BMC.
- Where a representative of a member organization has been asked to represent the BMC, they are expected to communicate coalition positions which represent consensus views of member organizations and to clarify if views expressed are not BMC positions.

**BMC Member Code of Professional Conduct: Duties and Responsibilities**

- Members understand and support the BMC's mission and goals and are familiar with BMC's current priorities.
- Members publicly represent the BMC and fellow members in a positive (or neutral) and professional manner. If members have concerns about the BMC or fellow members, they are to voice those concerns confidentially to the BMC Executive Director or a Board member and not in any public setting.
- Members must respect confidentiality related to the work of the BMC or its members and exercise good judgement regarding external sharing of internal communications and/or documents.
- Members must appreciate conflict of interest/duty issues and declare potential conflict areas, whether real or perceived, at meetings and during all dealings with the BMC.
- While levels of involvement in BMC activities, such as working groups or attendance at BMC or external meetings, may vary, we expect members to follow through on commitments, including attending meetings or participating in conference calls.
- We expect members to be accessible and responsive to the BMC by providing feedback when asked and indicating availability in a timely manner.
- Dealings among BMC members will be harmonious, and all members must diligently avoid introducing external or organizational conflicts into BMC proceedings.
- Members will interact respectfully with each other and staff to ensure a positive working environment. In addition, under the direction of the Chair, members must make every effort to understand and adhere to time limitations during meetings and conference calls, and to show respect for the opinions of others.

**Adoption and Enforcement of Code of Conduct:**

- Prospective members must review and accept the *Membership Criteria and Code of Professional Conduct* and confirm to the BMC that they have done so. (Current members reviewed and accepted the Code when it was initiated.)
- If a possible violation of the *Membership Criteria and Code of Professional Conduct* or By-laws is brought to the attention of BMC staff or a Director, the matter will be referred to the Board of Directors for appropriate action.