

December 30, 2002

Dear Larry:

The AAP Board of Directors has asked me to respond to your recent letter regarding our relationships with industry. As you know the subject is much larger than the specific issues involved in our dealings with Ross over the New Mothers Guide to Breastfeeding book, but those same points are an important subset of the entire picture. The Board of Directors has decided to push forward our timetable for beginning discussion to the next Board meeting. We will start our discussion at the Board Retreat on Thursday, January 23, 2003. You or a representative of the Section on Breastfeeding are invited to be the first speaker. You will have fifteen minutes for a formal presentation with an additional fifteen minutes for dialogue with the Board.

The Board's timetable for a decision is as follows: Step 1, Dissemination of all AAP materials on the subject to Board attendees. Step 2, Discussion at the Board meeting to include Board members, Vice District Chairs, COCOMAN and COSMAN representatives, and selected staff members. Step 3, Staff will draft policy to be reviewed by the Board within a month. Step 4, Review of proposed policy draft by the Council on Sections and the Council on Committees at their March meeting as well as on-line review by members of the Annual Chapter Forum. Step 5, Review and adoption by the Board at its May meeting.

The Board is particularly interested in your Section's view of the role editors and contributors should play in dealing with industry. We understand from our

representatives who attended your Section meeting in Boston that this is a major concern. Later, along with other Sections, Committees and Chapters, you will share in the opportunity to review drafts of the comprehensive plan.

Dealing with industry is not an easy task and is dynamic. We have been aware of the delicate path we must tread and, indeed just last winter, discussed this need as a “mega” issue at a Board meeting. You and others believe that we crossed the line of acceptability in this instance. We have heard your concerns and we are committed to doing all we can to avoid a similar situation in the future. The steps outlined above represent our effort to achieve this goal.

I shall look forward to seeing you or your representative on January 23.

Sincerely,

E. Stephen Edwards, MD, FAAP

President, American Academy of Pediatrics