

## How PAAB's work matters to your membership

*This document is intended to help organizations determine whether it is in their strategic interest to become members of the PAAB. A description of our organization, its key services, and what we aim to achieve through those services is presented herein. Please do not hesitate to contact the PAAB Commissioner, Patrick Massad at [patrickm@paab.ca](mailto:patrickm@paab.ca) if you have any questions about how the strategic interests of our respective organizations are aligned and how you can give your member's a voice in the important work of the PAAB.*

The Pharmaceutical Advertising Advisory Board (PAAB) is a not-for-profit association that works to protect Canadians by ensuring that health product advertising meets the regulatory, scientific, therapeutic, and ethical standards outlined in the Code of Advertising Acceptance.

Truth in healthcare product promotion matters because high quality information is at the core of state-of-the-art patient care.

## What does the PAAB Code apply to?

The PAAB Code of Advertising Acceptance applies to:

- advertising for prescription, non-prescription, biological and natural health products directed to healthcare professionals in any media.
- patient information generated by drug manufacturers for dissemination through any means involving healthcare professionals

The PAAB also provides advisory services on direct-to-consumer materials for prescription, Schedule D, and Schedule Ethical drugs.

## Who utilizes the PAAB preclearance system and why?

Health product manufacturers and their communication agencies submit their promotional materials through the PAAB preclearance mechanism. They do so because PAAB preclearance helps ensure that the advertising adheres to applicable regulations. It also creates a leveled playing field in the market by:

- ✓ helping all manufacturers understand and meet the same set of rigorous standards
- ✓ conducting reviews through an independent and impartial lens

The advertiser is entitled to affix the PAAB logo on approved advertising materials. The PAAB logo is intended to signal that materials to which it is affixed have been **independently reviewed** to meet **high standards**.

Although participation in the PAAB preclearance process is voluntary for the majority of healthcare products, participation in the preclearance process is strongly recommended by Health Canada.

## Why does PAAB preclearance matter to organizations beyond healthcare product manufacturers and communication agencies?

Because of what the PAAB's seal of approval (i.e., the PAAB logo), represents to so many different stakeholders. For example:

1. For Healthcare professionals, it signifies that promotional materials are trustworthy because:
  - ✓ all claims contained therein are supported by valid and representative evidence
  - ✓ claims of benefit are appropriately balanced with important and relevant information pertaining to risk in order to promote rational drug therapy
2. For patients, it signifies that the informational materials are trustworthy because:
  - ✓ product information is based Health Canada approved information
  - ✓ disease information is based on authoritative sources
  - ✓ the tone is informative rather than promotional
3. For regulators, it signifies that the materials meet regulatory requirements because:
  - ✓ materials are consistent with the Health Canada approved label
  - ✓ The materials are truthful, and they are neither false nor misleading
4. For publishers, media companies and platforms, it signifies that:
  - ✓ the advertising is aligned with applicable regulations
  - ✓ the advertising can be considered trustworthy by their registrants or subscribers

## What other key roles does PAAB play?

In addition to preclearance, the PAAB adjudicates advertising complaints from drug manufacturers and healthcare professionals. The PAAB also proactively monitors advertising in the marketplace.

The complaints and monitoring systems compliment the preclearance mechanism. Preclearance plays a preventative role as it aims to ensure that PAAB code infractions are addressed before the advertising is circulated to healthcare professionals. In contrast, the complaints and monitoring systems play a reactive / corrective role. They provide an additional safety net by identifying and addressing PAAB code infractions within advertising materials that got into circulation.

The PAAB also delivers training on advertising regulations and provides advisory assessments.

## Who are PAAB's members?

If the PAAB's work impacts your membership, consider whether your organization should join the robust slate of PAAB members:

- Best Medicines Coalition
- BIOTECanada
- Canadian Association of Medical Publishers (CAMP)
- Canadian Generic Pharmaceutical Association (CGPA)
- Canadian Medical Association (CMA)
- Canadian Pharmacists Association
- Consumer Council of Canada
- Innovative Medicines Canada
- Food, Health & Consumer Products of Canada (FHCP)

The PAAB maintains a balance between representation inside and outside of the healthcare product industry in both its membership and its board of directors. Health Canada also participates in PAAB Board meetings in an advisory role.

## How can I start the membership application process?

Write a letter on official letterhead indicating your organization's interest in joining PAAB's membership. This letter should:

- be signed by the organization's President/CEO or other senior official.
- designate a volunteer representative who will vote, on behalf of your organization, during the annual PAAB meeting of members.
- be accompanied with background information about the volunteer (e.g., resume, CV, or summary of experience/skills/interests).
- be emailed to the PAAB Commissioner at [patrickm@paab.ca](mailto:patrickm@paab.ca)

There are no membership fees. Pre-approved expenses associated with attending meetings are reimbursed.