

United States Senate

COMMITTEE ON FINANCE

WASHINGTON, DC 20510-6200

September 24, 2007

Via Electronic Transmission

Elizabeth Ostric
President
Medical Education & Research Institute
44 South Cleveland
Memphis, TN 38104

Dear Ms. Ostric:

The United States Senate Committee on Finance (Committee) has jurisdiction over the Medicare and Medicaid programs. As a senior member of the United States Senate and as Ranking Member of the Committee, I have a special responsibility to: protect the health of Medicare and Medicaid beneficiaries and safeguard taxpayer dollars authorized by Congress for these programs. This includes the responsibility to conduct oversight of the medical industry, including the independence of medical education programs.

In carrying out this duty, I seek to learn more about how Continuing Medical Education (CME) programs work in the medical device industry, and how they ensure their independence from industry. I understand that your organization, the Medical Education & Research Institute (MERI), is a nonprofit medical teaching and training facility with close ties to Medtronic, America's largest maker of medical devices. For this reason, I request that your company brief my staff on MERI's practices and on CME programs in general.

In cooperating with the Committee's inquiry, no documents, records, data, or other information related to these matters, either directly or indirectly, shall be destroyed, modified, removed, or otherwise made inaccessible to the Committee. In addition, we would appreciate your identifying a MERI representative with whom we can discuss matters relating to your company as soon as possible.

I look forward to hearing from you by no later than October 2, 2007. Any documents responsive to this request should be sent electronically, on a disc, in searchable PDF format to Brian_Downey@finance-rep.senate.gov. If you have any questions, please do not hesitate to contact Chris Armstrong or Paul Thacker at (202) 224-4515.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Chuck Grassley". The signature is written in a cursive style with a prominent "C" and "G".

Charles E. Grassley
Ranking Member