

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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CONTACT: Marketing Research Association; Kristina Labrecque, (860-682-1000) Marketing Research Association Victory in Massachusetts ; Physician Incentives Officially Exempted from New Regulations

(Glastonbury, Conn.) Today, the Marketing Research Association (MRA) announces victory in its lobbying and grassroots actions to protect research with health care practitioners in Massachusetts. The Massachusetts Department of Health has issued official guidance exempting market research incentives from the application of the state's new Marketing Code of Conduct for pharmaceutical and medical device manufacturers.

The Department specifically exempted incentives from public reporting requirements, as long as health care practitioners who receive market research incentives "do not know what pharmaceutical or medical device manufacturing company" sponsored the research and the sponsor "does not know which health care practitioners participated in the study".

MRA organized researchers on the ground in Massachusetts to help convince the state government to exempt market research. The research profession faced a short timeframe before the regulations came into effect, threatening a key part of the research business.

Terri-Lynn Hawley, an MRA volunteer and Vice President at Schlesinger Associates in Boston, raved about the victory and her experience as a citizen activist. "I really enjoyed working on this. It is something that I was very passionate about and it is nice to see that one really can make a difference."

In addition to Terri, MRA thanked Aurora Choi of Focus Pointe Global, Lloyd Simon of Cambridge Focus, Frank Amelia of Copley Focus Centers, Larry Jenkins of Focus On Boston, Brenda Chartoff of National Field and Focus, Maria Kuschel of Fieldwork Boston, and Jason Miller of Performance Plus for their efforts, as well as other members of the profession that responded to MRA's grassroots action webpage.

MRA still faces the threat of legislation in numerous states and in the U.S. Congress that could require public reporting of incentives or ban them outright.

On March 11, 2009 the Massachusetts Public Health Council released new regulations (the Marketing Code of Conduct) for interactions with health care practitioners. By requiring the public reporting of payments to practitioners that originated from pharmaceutical and medical device manufacturers, the Code would have made practitioners less likely to participate in vital survey research that provides enormous benefit to the public. Reduced participation would have led to less research performed in Massachusetts, resulting in significant loss of jobs and income – something that Massachusetts could ill afford in this time of economic hardship.

Research incentives to health care practitioners are more frequently being caught up in attempts at the state level to restrict "gifts" to practitioners from pharmaceutical, medical device, and medical supply manufacturers. Such "gifts" are assumed to be buying influence on behalf of the manufacturers.

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The Marketing Research Association is the leading and largest association of the survey and opinion research profession. It promotes, advocates and protects the integrity of the survey and opinion research profession and strives to improve respondent cooperation in opinion research which is a multi-billion dollar a year industry dedicated to providing valuable information to guide decisions of companies, individuals and others. For more information, visit www.mra-net.org.