



WebMD Statement re: Editorial Integrity

April 6, 2016

WebMD has set a goal to be the most trusted source of health content on the internet. We are proud of the recognition and awards we have received for our comprehensive, credible and accurate information.

We are deeply disappointed by some recent coverage by Vox that called into question the accuracy and credibility of our content, and inappropriately suggested that the appearance of advertising on our site somehow influences our editorial coverage.

At WebMD, we create the best health information on the web by following three principles to ensure the integrity and accuracy of what we produce; all three of these vital principles were ignored or minimized in recent coverage:

1. **Editorial Independence:** WebMD maintains an editorial staff that is separate and distinct from our staff that works with advertisers and sponsors. Our editorial controls and [policies](#) prohibit the modifying of a story on behalf of, or for the benefit of, an advertiser or sponsor. To suggest that the appearance of advertising on WebMD.com influences our editorial coverage calls into question the fundamental premise of independent advertiser-supported publishers and media companies in general, including Vox. What sets us apart is that we maintain a clear and transparent separation between our editorial and advertising teams.
2. **Medical Review:** Behind the scenes, we have more than 120 award-winning writers, editors, and producers, as well as an in-house staff of board-certified physician editors who medically review all of our content for accuracy, appropriateness of medical language, and proper characterization of the findings. The medical reviewer—and a link to the professional's biography—is identified on every piece of WebMD content. This review is at the heart of our approach and is one of the reasons that we have earned a reputation for accuracy. Additionally, we regularly review the tens of thousands of pages of our content that we publish so that we can make any updates or changes where appropriate.
3. **Full Transparency:** Like other media outlets and publishers, including Vox, WebMD does publish in certain circumstances content that is authored by our advertisers. In all cases, however, advertiser content is clearly labeled as provided by the advertiser to make the sourcing clear to our users, and our process for labeling that content is [spelled out publicly](#). We believe that identifying the source of such sponsored web pages is critically important. Additionally, in that regard, since 2000, WebMD has been awarded Health Web Site accreditation from URAC, an independent accrediting body that maintains quality and ethics standards, particularly as they relate to the clear labeling of independent editorial content vs. advertiser content.

Adherence to these principles has enabled us to establish WebMD as the most trusted brand of health information on the web. We believe that everyone should have access to the health information we provide because being better informed can help improve both health outcomes and the patient-doctor relationship. Being a leader in this area means that our methods and procedures have been subject to scrutiny since our founding in 1996. We welcome such scrutiny of our work, and we stand behind our extraordinary track record of putting consumers first. No other entity, public or private, has generated as much physician-vetted, consumer-directed health information than WebMD, and our 74 million visitors a month affirm the success of our model and our commitment to empowering decision-making and motivating positive action.