

WHY NOT NON-PROFIT?

What is PfAM?

The primary purpose of PfAM is to educate patients about trends related to access to alternative medicine. This includes influencing legislation through voter education. To apply for non-profit status would obligate PfAM to change our primary purpose in order to comply with public policy.

Why for profit?

Originally, we intended to obtain non-profit status, – until it came to our attention (*In Caesar's Grip* by Peter Kershaw) that it includes a commitment to conform to public (i.e., government) policy. The Application for Recognition of Exemption Under Section 501 (c)(3) becomes a binding legal document with stiff penalties for any organization convicted of violating that commitment. It's a risk that PfAM can't afford to take without compromising what we stand for. Our organization spends 50% or more of its time researching and tracking what is happening to our foods, food additives, access to dietary supplements, health care trends and related legislative issues. The remainder of the time is divided between networking, public education and the production and distribution of our newsletter.

The primary purpose of our newsletter, *The Patients' Voice*, is an example of why we need to remain for profit. Recently we asked our members to evaluate the mix of articles in *The Patients' Voice* and to rate the articles. Consistently the box was checked for current issues, including state and federal legislation related to dietary supplements, foods, food additives, and health insurance. More articles were also requested about genetic engineering. We personally believe that to ignore this input would be a disservice to those we are dedicated to serve. With this in mind, the PfAM Executive Board has decided unanimously to remain a for-profit organization. This decision puts us in the best possible position to support legislation favorable to natural medicine, complementary health care providers and by means of legislative alerts, newsletter articles, and phone calls.

Are we lobbyist, then?

The role of PfAM differs significantly from the role of lobbyists in regards to legislation. The primary purpose of a lobbyist is to educate legislators, in connection with an identified organization or profession. A lobbyist is paid by the organization and typically does not work independently from it. In contrast, PfAM is dedicated primarily to the interests of patients who are served by complementary health care providers. Lobbyist can benefit from the kind of informed support an organization like PfAM can provide. Powerful special interest groups normally depend on the media to garner public support, but providers of complementary medicine and their patients are short on medial appeal.

Is PfAM a fund- raising organization?

PfAM can hardly be considered a money-making organization, at least not until we break even. PfAM is a grass-roots, all-volunteer organization that is operated solely on donations, sponsors, memberships/subscribers to our newsletter *The Patients' Voice*, advertisers and sale of materials. Furthermore, we won't knowingly take money from pharmaceutical companies or their subsidiaries. This is why your support of PfAM and its activities is so crucial. Please help us strengthen our voice by joining us today!