



TORONTO - October 27 - Yesterday at its Annual General Meeting, the Public Affairs Association of Canada (PAAC) adopted a comprehensive Statement of Ethical Principles. Developed in consultation with experts in public affairs, governance and jurisprudence, the Statement provides a voluntary guide for practitioners in developing, and acting upon, best practices.

PAAC is a national, not-for-profit organization founded in 1984. Its principal objective is to help public affairs professionals succeed in their work by providing a forum for professional development, the exchange of new ideas and networking. PAAC's growing membership represents a cross-section of the many disciplines involved in public affairs including policy development, government relations, lobbying, communications, opinion research and public relations.

"Public affairs, including lobbying, is an important part of the democratic process," said Chris Benedetti, Past President of PAAC. "The majority of people who practice public affairs act in a professional and ethical manner. They help make policies better and build public awareness around important issues of the day. The Statement of Ethical Principles helps define what most practitioners already do, but it also provides a viable, identifiable guidepost."

Beyond abiding by relevant federal and provincial legislation, the Statement is a compass indicating the expectations for appropriate conduct. It contains a series of guidelines that define instances where conflicts arise and how they should be handled, how to ensure transparency in protecting the public interest, and how to positively engage positively with government while serving the interests of not-for-profit and private sector clients. It also requires professionals to avoid impropriety, act at all times with due respect for the law, provide services in a manner that is forthright and unbiased, and to treat financial and contractual matters in a clear and honest manner.

"By developing a statement of ethical principles, the Public Affairs Association of Canada has made an important contribution to building trust and enhancing the integrity of its profession," said Tracy Parker, Executive Director of the EthicsCentre CA.

"Too often public affairs practitioners are characterized by the actions of a few bad apples," said Mr. Benedetti. "This Statement will help root out these individuals, and will result in a better, more accountable environment for public affairs."

Over the coming weeks PAAC will be promoting the Statement of Ethical Principles through a series of events and workshops that will help to continue educating practitioners about ethical conduct, as well as an awareness building program to help overcome misperceptions and misunderstandings as to the value of good public affairs.

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