

Samuels sees med ed venture as 'pure'

Dr. Martin Samuels says the idea for Lighthouse Learning, a newly launched CME provider that eschews industry money and won't conduct meetings or solicit exhibitors, had been evolving for years. The company is the brainchild of Samuels, who is director of medical education, and his wife, Susan Pioli, who serves as VP of program recruitment and development. Samuels makes very clear that he isn't "anti-industry." Rather, he's pro "pure curriculum."

"I'm not against industry," he says. "I just want to create a really high-quality curriculum in advance of any sale to anyone so no one can say there's even any appearance of conflict. Doctors and the public are concerned about the appearance. It isn't that everything is tainted, but there is an appearance that things are tainted, and you can't tell the difference."

Funding will come exclusively from selling curricula to medical societies, insurance companies, professional meetings companies, healthcare organizations and other entities. Formally launched September 14 with Jon Leibowitz at the helm as president and CEO, Lighthouse recently landed its first customer, a new company called Medical Exchange.

"I don't make an apology that we're for profit and our business model is to sell curriculum to people who do put on meetings," Samuels says. "I'm sure some will have exhibitors at their meetings. I don't have any problem with that."

While watching a lighthouse on a foggy day in Boston, Samuels realized that the diffusion of light perfectly represented his and Pioli's concept of education.

"We thought the essence of [CME] involved the creation of very intense, high-quality curriculum in specialties that diffused outward to involve primary care doctors and patients and their families," he explains.

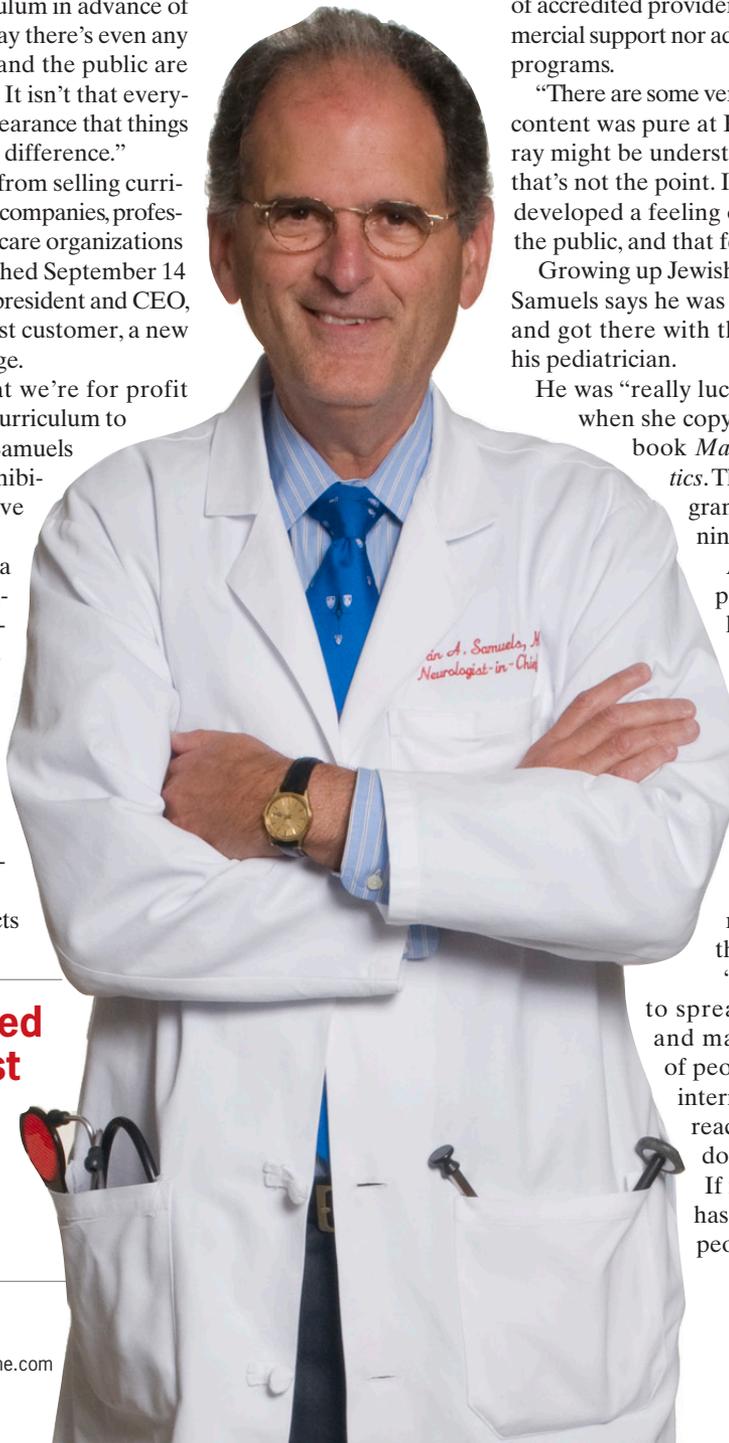
The curriculum covers 12 subjects

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Martin Samuels
*Dir., medical education,
Lighthouse Learning*

2008-2009
Chief medical officer at
Pri-Med

1998-present
Founder and chairman of
the department of neurology
at Brigham and Women's
Hospital



with 80-to-100 modules, which each include three levels. It's a tiered approach wherein specialists write modules for sub-specialists, who in turn write for PCPs, who write for patients and families. Samuels says about 3,600 modules are 90% complete, and they will expand over time.

Prior to founding Lighthouse, Samuels was chief medical officer at Pri-Med for a year. He will continue giving talks for the company.

Dr. Murray Kopelow, executive director of ACCME told *MM&M* in September that in 2009 about 42% of accredited providers reported taking neither commercial support nor ad/exhibit income for educational programs.

"There are some very good med ed companies – the content was pure at Pri-Med," Samuels says. "Murray might be understating commercial support, but that's not the point. It's the appearance – CME has developed a feeling of distrust among doctors and the public, and that feeling undermines it."

Growing up Jewish on the east side of Cleveland, Samuels says he was "programmed to be a doctor" and got there with the support of his parents and his pediatrician.

He was "really lucky" to meet Pioli in the 1970s when she copyedited the third edition of his book *Manual of Neurologic Therapeutics*. They have two children and two grandchildren, and they enjoy running and cooking.

At 45, Samuels learned to play piano. Playing every day gives him "huge peace of mind."

He keeps one in his office, and even uses it to evaluate musician patients at a clinic at Brigham and Women's Hospital, where he's founder and chairman of the department of neurology. Lighthouse accounts for about a tenth of his time. His priority now is finishing and fine-tuning the curriculum.

"I want the Lighthouse idea to spread out to involve thousands and maybe hundreds of thousands of people," Samuels says. "With the internet, there's no reason we can't reach people anywhere on earth. I don't know if it's going to work. If it doesn't, it doesn't. I think it has a good chance because I think people are ready for this."

— Tanya Lewis

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