

**Society of Gynecologic Oncology & Foundation for Gynecologic Oncology
Policy and Procedure**

POLICY NUMBER	1.7
POLICY NAME	Conflict of Interest Disclosure and Dissociation Policy
DATE OF ORIGIN	November 2009

In order for the Society of Gynecologic Oncology (the "Society") to further the educational, scientific and charitable purposes for which it was organized and to maintain the excellent reputation in which it is held by the public and the medical profession, it is important that Society decisions and actions not be influenced unduly by any special interests of individual members. The Society depends upon its members to shape its policies and the actions of those members in shaping such policies must not be inappropriately affected by outside influences. Therefore, it has always been and continues to be important to identify actual or potential conflicts of interest which might improperly affect Society activities and decisions. As the professional and business settings and relationships in which Society members play significant roles become increasingly varied and complex, informal means of identifying actual or potential conflicts of interest become increasingly inadequate. Accordingly, the Board of the Society has adopted this more formal system for the disclosure, evaluation and management of conflicts of interest.

A. Definition of a Conflict of Interest.

A conflict of interest is defined as an interest held by a member or a business associate or an immediate family member that could influence the member or be perceived as influencing the member to act contrary to the interests of the Society and for the member's own personal benefit or for the benefit of an immediate family member or business associate. For purposes of this policy an immediate family member is defined as a member's spouse, children, parents, siblings and brothers and sisters-in-law.

B. Duty to Disclose Conflicting Interests.

Each officer, Board member, Executive Committee member, committee and task force member and senior administrative staff member, and others holding leadership positions in the Society, shall disclose all actual or potential conflicts of interest which he or she may identify during the course of his or her service to the Society. Sources of possible conflicting interests which must be disclosed include, but are not limited to, the following:

(1) Interests which may affect economic transactions to which the Society is or may be a direct party. Ownership by a Society officer of a financial interest in a company from which the Society makes purchases of goods or services is an example.

(2) Interests which might cause a representative of the Society to abuse a Society position in order to achieve objectives which are inconsistent with the purposes of the Society. An equity interest held by a Chair of a Society education committee in a company that puts on training courses for Society members is an example.

(3) Affiliations, including officer, director, committee and consulting positions, with organizations which have conflicting or dual goals or have competing business and professional interests or activities. Examples would include participation on the board of a medical specialty society that conducts competing professional activities such as coding and practice management workshops or comparable educational programs; serving as a consultant to or an expert witness for a pharmaceutical company whose products are purchased by Society members; or serving in an officer or director position in another organization whose membership is comprised principally of surgeons certified by the American Board of Obstetrics and Gynecology and whose interests may conflict with those of the Society.

(4) Receipt of pharmaceutical industry grants, including contracted research, by the member or the member's practice group or academic department.

- (5) Other personal relationships, activities or interests that may impair an individual's objectivity or may inappropriately influence the individual's decisions or actions in Society matters.

The foregoing examples are illustrative and should not be considered the only ones which might give rise to a conflict of interest. If in doubt, one should err on the side of full disclosure in order to permit an objective and impartial determination of the possible conflict by the Society.

Disclosure Statement

Each Society officer, Board member, committee and task force member and senior administrative staff member will be required to sign and submit to the Secretary-Treasurer of the Society annual disclosure statements. The Board may from time to time amend the content and form of the statement.

Dissociation

The President, President-Elect I, President-Elect II, Immediate Past President Editor in Chief of Gynecologic Oncology and the Executive Director, in addition to being required to disclose all actual or potential conflicts of interest may not during their terms of office hold officer, director, consulting, managerial, employment or any other position, whether or not compensated, with any health-related business concern defined as a for-profit entity that produces, markets, or distributes drugs, devices or services used by members of the Society in the treatment of patients ("health-related business concern"). They may not individually receive restricted or unrestricted grants, salaries, consulting fees, royalties or any other form of compensation from a health-related business concern during their terms of office. Such individuals may not during their terms participate as spokespersons for any such health-related business concern through an industry speakers bureau or otherwise and may not present at educational programs sponsored, funded, managed or directed by such a health-related business concern.

Resolving Conflicts

The President and the Executive Director of the Society shall review the conflict of interest disclosure statements in order to be alert to potential conflicts and to resolve conflicts wherever possible in advance of meetings of the Society's Board and Executive Committee.

When any matter comes before the Board or Executive Committee of the Society that has the potential to create a conflict for a member, the affected member shall make known the potential conflict, whether or not disclosed by his or her written disclosure statement. Disclosure should be made as soon as practicable after receipt of the agenda for the meeting. To ensure appropriate disclosure, a summary of the information disclosed by each Board or Executive Committee member with specific financial data redacted will be provided to the Board or Executive Committee at the beginning of each meeting.

Should a conflict or conflicts be disclosed concerning a member that affect or relate to any matter on the agenda of the Board or Executive Committee meeting, the President may request the member to take one of the following steps:

1. remain in the room, participating fully in the discussion involving the conflict but not vote;
2. remain in the room while the matter is being discussed but not speak or vote;
3. provide his or her opinion and leave the room while the matter is discussed and voted upon;
4. remain out of the room while the matter is being discussed and voted upon.

The President may also make other determinations related to the matter, including insulating the member from documents that might be related.

If the member disagrees with the ruling of the President or does not agree that a conflict exists, the member will not participate in the discussion forming the basis for the conflict and the matter will be referred to the Conflict of Interest Committee consisting of the Immediate Past-President, the Secretary-Treasurer and the Executive Director.

If the conflict of interest affects the President, the President-Elect is empowered to act and to request that the President excuse himself or herself. The same procedures as outlined above will be followed if the President disagrees with the ruling of the President-Elect. For the duration of the discussion and action on the matter, the President-Elect shall preside.

The minutes of the meeting shall reflect the disclosure of the potential conflict and any actions taken in response to the disclosure.

The foregoing procedure shall also be followed by the committees and task forces of the Society except that in the case of committees or task forces, the committee or task force Chair and Vice Chair shall perform the functions performed by the President and President-Elect.

Conclusion

Because proper disclosure by each individual Society leader is essential, it is important to approach with the proper perspective the question of what types of circumstances call for disclosure. The purpose of this policy is not to discourage all involvement by Society members in outside activities which might produce actual or potential conflicts with interests of the Society. Rather this Policy is designed to establish a fair and transparent framework for members of the Society who have actual or potential conflicts of interest to continue to participate as appropriate in Society activities as valued members of the Society. Common sense should guide all decisions about what to disclose. One reasonable test is whether a particular interest or relationship, if disclosed to the full membership of the Society would be likely to cause embarrassment for the Society and/or the individual involved or evoke suspicion about the motives behind any Society action.