



## **American Society of Nephrology Conflict of Interest Policy**

The American Society of Nephrology (ASN) is a mission-based non-profit organization. Integrity and independent decision making are key to the society's ability to fulfill its mission.

Volunteers, employees, and others working on behalf of ASN have a variety of relationships, interests, and memberships, and ASN collaborates with a variety of other organizations, governmental and non-governmental. These relationships may create actual or potential conflicts of interest or commitment. ASN requires disclosure of all actual or potential conflicts, and, as determined by ASN, management or resolution of any conflicts to ensure that actions taken are in the best interest of those who suffer from kidney diseases and the professionals who care for them.

This overarching policy addresses ASN panel volunteers, staff, contracted parties, those engaged with ASN in decision-making roles, and others who engage with ASN in programs and initiatives that advance care for people with kidney diseases. Because of the diversity of ASN's activities and operations, some volunteer and staff positions may require specific and distinct procedures for addressing conflicts of interest or commitment. All those procedures must be consistent with applicable law and this policy, and are available for review below in Section 4.

### **1. Disclosures**

All those covered by ASN's conflict of interest or commitment policies must fully disclose, and update as necessary, financial and non-financial relationships, including their employment, ownership interests, memberships, investments, and holdings, including those held by immediate family members.

All disclosures must be provided to ASN before appointment or election to any panel, annually thereafter, and whenever any change occurs.

### **2. Evaluation**

Reporting these personal and other business relationships generally does not prevent an individual from working with or volunteering for ASN panels. ASN will evaluate non-financial and financial relationships for actual or perceived conflicts based on the nature of the position, decision-making authority, pervasiveness of the conflict and whether additional measures such as management plans are needed to protect the integrity and reputation of ASN.

### **3. Resolution**

In some cases, conflicts may preclude participation in a specific ASN program or panel. In the majority of cases, conflicts may be resolved by:

- Recusal from deliberating and/or voting on the particular transaction or matter in which he or she has an interest; and otherwise refraining from exerting any influence on the specific decision-making process.
- Withdrawal from a position with another organization that creates a conflict. In addition, when a volunteer holds a leadership position or holds a decision-making role in another organization, the volunteer will not disclose or use confidential or proprietary information of ASN or otherwise make disclosures that could be injurious or disadvantageous to ASN.

In some cases, the conflict may be determined unmanageable. ASN's decision in that regard is final.

#### Creating a management plan

- In some cases, ASN may require a management plan be developed in order to reasonably manage the conflict. ASN Council members may reach out to the ASN Committee on Ethics and Professional Standards for guidance relative to council conflicts or other potential conflicts that arise in their governance of the society.
- Resolution will be based on the facts and circumstances of each individual situation, but may in some cases require action up to and including the withdrawal of the nomination of an individual from the conflicting relationship or from the position, or withdrawal from that role with ASN. ASN's decision is final.

#### **4. Individual procedures**

ASN Board Review Course and Update (BRCU), ASN Kidney Week, ASN Highlights faculty must file disclosures with ASN in advance of the educational event, and they must, in writing, agree to adhere to the guidelines and policies of the [Accreditation Council for Continuing Medical Education](#) (ACCME).

All authors listed on abstracts that are submitted to ASN Kidney Week must complete forms disclosing all potential conflicts in order for the abstracts to be reviewed.

ASN Communities require members of online communities to adhere to the [ASN Communities Code of Conduct](#).

All those who submit applications to the ASN Innovations in Kidney Education Contest must adhere to the contest rules. *{Need permanent place for these on website. AL/JSK.}*

In review and administration of the ASN grants program, ASN KidneyCure leaders and staff adhere to the [ASN Policy on Scientific Misconduct \(Grants Program\)](#). Recipients of the ASN-RWJF Harold Amos Award must adhere to the conflict-of-interest policies of the Robert Wood Johnson Foundation.

The ASN Kidney Health Initiative (KHI) requires all members to adhere to the [KHI Conflict of Interest Policy](#).

ASN peer-reviewed journals and self-assessment publications:

- Clinical Journal of the American Society of Nephrology (CJASN)
- Journal of the American Society of Nephrology (JASN)
- Kidney 360
- KSAP
- NephSAP

All three peer-reviewed journals, KSAP and NephSAP adhere to [author conflict of interest guidelines](#) maintained by the International Committee of Medical Journal Editors (ICMJE).

NephSAP and KSAP also adhere to guidelines and policies of the [Accreditation Council for Continuing Medical Education](#) (ACCME) and the ASN educational disclosure [guidelines](#).

Editors of ASN journals and self-assessment publications agree to follow the [ASN Policy on Scientific Misconduct](#) if and as required.

ASN members or staff who participate in research conducted by ASN or sponsored by ASN as the primary applicant/principal investigator must adhere to the [ASN Policy on Research Misconduct](#).

### **Specific to educational content produced by ASN:**

- *Educational publications*

Appointed editors of ASN educational publications have full authority over the editorial content of the publication, generally referred to as editorial independence, within the context of internal peer review and processes that adhere to Accreditation Council for Continuing Medical Education (ACCME) [criteria](#) and [standards](#). Editorial content includes educational updates and review articles, original research, opinion articles and news reports, in print or electronic format, and how and when information is published.

ASN as publisher of these programs will not interfere in the evaluation, selection or editing of individual articles, either directly or by creating an environment in which editorial decisions are strongly influenced. Editors should be receptive to articles representing all legitimate points of view and should be free to publish any responsible positions. However, ASN cannot be expected to retain editors who take strong, consistent, one-sided positions against the core values and policies of ASN.

In the case of scientific misconduct, editors of these educational publications follow the [relevant ASN scientific misconduct policy](#).

- *Meeting content*

Expert planners of ASN educational programs have full authority over the content of the programs, in the context of a robust planning, vetting and peer review process that is guided by the ASN Continuous Professional Development Committee (see charge below), and adheres to the Accreditation Council for Continuing Medical Education (ACCME) [criteria](#) and [standards](#). Program content includes meeting abstracts that have undergone peer review, oral and poster presentations, educational sessions and any other programs that are part of the official ASN program.

The evaluation, selection and presentation of the meeting program content must follow the protocols established by the ASN Continuous Professional Development Committee and ACCME. ASN supports ACCME guidelines and maintains strict internal conflict of interest policies, and will not allow industry or other outside supporters or sponsors to influence content, nor will ASN create an environment in which program content decisions are inappropriately influenced. However, ASN cannot be expected to retain program planners or other expert volunteers who take strong, consistent, one-sided positions against the core values and policies of ASN.

*ASN Continuous Professional Development Committee charge:*

*Oversee ASN's educational enterprise; maintain ASN compliance with standards and requirements of continuing education accreditation in the United States; oversee research, analysis, and assessment of new educational endeavors, collaborative programs, and interactions with commercial entities; address issues related to maintaining professional standing and ensuring lifelong learning; and recommend opportunities for the development of educational programs and services to meet the needs of ASN members worldwide.*