American Academy of Dermatology Policy Summary:
Conflict of Interest Management Procedures for Clinical Practice Guidelines

The American Academy of Dermatology (AAD) facilitates high quality dermatology patient care through the development of clinical guidelines. The AAD develops these guidelines using a multi-step evidence-based process which combines the best available medical literature supplemented with expert opinion and several iterative layers of peer review and approval. Member and public confidence in these resources requires that AAD guidelines be developed free from conflict of interest concerns, whether real or perceived. The AAD does not accept industry support for the development of evidence-based guidelines, and participation in an expert work group is voluntary and uncompensated.

This summary provides an overview of the AAD guidelines conflict of interest policy that requires full disclosure (financial and non-financial interests) for all individuals affiliated with the development, review, comment, and approval of AAD guidelines. These relationships are periodically evaluated for their relevancy to the guideline and systematically managed using planned recusal, and if necessary, dismissal from the development process to ensure consistency and transparency.

Guideline Contributors
Production of an AAD evidence-based guideline follows a Board approved set of Administrative Regulations that outlines a role in the development and/or approval of a draft guideline for the:

- Expert Work Group
- AAD Staff/Medical Writer
- Clinical Guidelines and Research Committee
- Council on Science and Research
- AAD Members
- Board of Directors

The guidelines conflict of interest policy applies to not only the members of the expert work group, but to all identified contributors to minimize the impact of potential bias.

Full Disclosure
Completion of the AAD disclosure statement is required at several points during the guideline development process for members of the work group and affiliated staff:

- Upon consideration for work group appointment.
- Prior to each meeting of the work group (via conference call or in person).
- Prior to the guideline approval process.
- Prior to Journal of the American Academy of Dermatology submission

For the remaining contributors, full disclosure must be provided when a draft guideline is made available for comment and being considered for approval.

Evaluation and Resolution
Review and deliberation over disclosed information for all contributors considers both the nature of the interest, the relevancy to the guideline topic, and the potential impact. There is no set monetary threshold or de facto disqualifying interest, as all interests have potential to lead to undue influence. One of four options are available following this evaluation:

- **Activity (appointment or ongoing participation) permitted**: no financial relationships are disclosed or disclosed information is not a possible source of bias.

- **Activity prohibited**: disclosed relevant relationships are unacceptable and could lead to inappropriate bias; appointment may be rescinded if guideline activity has already commenced.
• **Activity permitted with exception:** relevant relationships are noted, but the need for expertise (and at times leadership) outweighs the potential conflict; participation is permitted with recusal required for discussions, drafting or voting on guideline text/recommendations, or guideline approval in areas related to the relevant interest.

• **Disclosed information requires further review:** final decision referred to senior governance group or Academy Ethics Committee.

Members may be asked if they are willing to dissociate from certain relationships prior to a final decision.

Guideline work groups must have a majority of participants (>51%) with no relevant financial conflicts, and the work group chair, medical writer and affiliated staff may not have any relevant financial conflicts. A Co-chair may be appointed for a guideline work group when it is believed the member’s expertise and leadership will lead to a better guideline; the co-chair may have relevant financial interests.

**Communication**
Journal disclosures and conflict of interest recusal history for all guideline authors will be included in the published guideline text, and will be included in the draft guideline for review during the member comment and full approval cycle.

*Any questions related to this policy may be directed to Academy staff at guidelines@aad.org.*