

# North American Neuromodulation Society

## Conflict of Interest Policy

### I. Scope and Purpose

The North American Neuromodulation Society (NANS) is dedicated to promoting the development and practice of safe, high quality, cost-effective neuromodulation techniques. To achieve this goal NANS engages in continuing medical education, research, advocacy and publication. It is the intent of NANS to ensure that these activities occur with the highest level of academic rigor and intellectual integrity.

These professional functions may be supported by related industries. Collaborative relationships between physicians and industry are essential to improve patient outcomes through research, innovation, testing, education and advocacy. However, when contractual or other remunerative relationships exist between physicians and industry there is a potential for creating bias. Because of the risk of real or perceived bias, transparency regarding financial interests is essential and required when participating in NANS related activities.

- A. This policy is not intended to create a presumption of impropriety on the part of any member. Disclosure does not imply any actual bias.
- B. A conflict of interest is defined as a set of circumstances that creates a risk that professional judgment or actions regarding a primary interest (such as education of health care professionals, integrity of research or development of clinical practice guidelines) have the potential to be unduly influenced by a secondary interest (such as financial interests).<sup>1</sup>
- C. Actual, potential, or apparent conflicts of interest must be disclosed.
- D. NANS defines financial interests as anything of monetary value, including but not limited to, salary or other payments for services (e.g., consulting fees or honoraria); equity interests (e.g., stocks, stock options or other ownership interests); and intellectual property rights (e.g., patents, copyrights and royalties from such rights) received within the preceding calendar year. This does not include investments in publicly available stocks such as mutual funds unless substantial ownership of a relevant corporate entity exists.
- E. Disclosure of potential conflicts of interest are required by all participants in NANS activities, including those who serve in leadership positions within the Society, editors and authors on NANS publications as well as speakers and presenters at NANS meetings.

### II. Ethical Guidelines

The collaborative relationships between physicians and industry must be structured to avoid improper inducements or incentives. When entering into such arrangements the following guidelines should be established in writing:

- A. Documentation of the need and scope of services provided.
- B. Proof that the service was provided.
- C. The nature of the remuneration should be consistent with fair market value for the work-product or services provided.
- D. Remuneration is not based on the volume or value of the business generated for the corporate or industrial entity providing payment.
- E. Financial strategies to avoid disclosure requirements, e.g., payments to a third party, spouse, corporation or foundation from which the physician receives any sort of

monetary compensation or other personal benefits are not acceptable and would be considered as incomplete disclosure.

- F. Financial arrangements that involve delayed or future compensation of any sort must be disclosed.

Certain financial arrangements may be inconsistent with holding an officer or directorship position within NANS. The ETHICS COMMITTEE as appointed by the NANS board of directors will make any necessary review and recommendations. Based on these recommendations, the NANS Board of Directors may limit involvement of members in leadership activities.

### **III. Disclosure Requirements**

A NANS “Conflict of Interest” form (appended to this document) must be completed before participation in any NANS sponsored activity. All payments received in the calendar year preceding the activity from any entity must be disclosed as a potential financial conflict of interest. As follows:

MINIMAL	LESS THAN \$1000
MINOR	\$1000 - \$25,000
MAJOR	\$25,000 - \$500,000
PRIMARY	GREATER THAN \$500,000 OR 50% OF INCOME

- A. Location of disclosure:
  - 1. Initial slide for lectures. Verbal disclosure is required by the moderator or presenter
  - 2. Program insert for presented papers
  - 3. Title page footnote for published papers
  
- B. Financial relationships requiring disclosure (if these occurred within preceding calendar year):
  - 1. Employment
  - 2. Honoraria, Royalties, intellectual property rights
  - 3. Research funding, study grant
  - 4. Consultancies,
  - 5. Joint ventures with related industries
  - 6. Equity interests
  
- C. Leadership Roles:
  - 1. Any leadership role (*e.g.*, board member, officer or advisor) with another medical or professional society associated with the field of NEUROMODULATION must be disclosed.

### **IV. Incomplete Disclosure**

Incomplete disclosure is defined as negligence in reporting required disclosures as defined above exceeding current market value of greater than \$10,000.

The ethics committee appointed by the board of directors shall be responsible for review of disclosure forms and determine if an actual conflict of interest or incomplete disclosure has occurred requiring a response and or action. Members, with significant concerns, may report perceived conflicts to the Society for review.

It is expected that questions will arise regarding compliance with this policy. Any member may seek the advice of the ethics committee to aid in resolving such questions. If a member participant fails to adhere to the obligations as set forth in this policy, the governing body of the Society, after careful review, following due process and consultation with the member, may invoke sanctions including but not limited to:

- A. Replacing the individual in the program or activity
- B. Barring the member from presenting at NANS events.
- C. Impeachment if an officer of NANS
- D. Suspension of editorial board activity
- E. Suspension or revocation of membership in NANS

1. Lo, Bernard, Marilyn J. Field. Conflict of Interest in Medical Research, Education, and Practice . Editors; Committee on Conflict of Interest in Medical Research, Education, and Practice; Institute of Medicine. Washington, D.C.: The National Academies Press, 2009.