

ASGE CONFLICT OF INTEREST AND RESOLUTION POLICY

ASGE is committed to maintaining the highest trust in the Society's integrity on behalf of its members, other medical societies, private and governmental health care institutions and agencies, and providers of educational programs. ASGE believes that close collaboration between the Society, industry, and academia can enhance education and research activities in endoscopy that ultimately benefit patients with digestive disorders. Nonetheless, some of these collaborations may result in conflicts between the interests of the Society and members working on behalf of the society. The expectation that decisions and actions by ASGE leadership will be unbiased and fair may be undermined by a conflict of interest, whether perceived or factual. To preserve ASGE's reputation and promote its mission, the Governing Board has established this policy on conflict of interest. Individuals who help determine ASGE decisions, policies and positions must be free of outside conflicts that might intentionally or unintentionally affect their responsibilities to the Society.

An individual who accepts an ASGE position on the Governing Board, a committee, task force, or as an invited speaker of an ASGE-sponsored course or meeting assumes the responsibility of complying with this policy. It is incumbent upon each member to disclose any and all involvement in activities that constitute or may be perceived as constituting a conflict of interest. As detailed herein, all potential conflicting interests must be disclosed in written form and resolved before the course of service or the activity. It is unacceptable to fail to disclose potential conflicts of interest. Those refusing to provide disclosure will not be allowed to participate in the activity. The presence of a conflict of interest does not dictate ineligibility to serve but may require that the individual modify or refrain from participation in specific activities.

Definitions

A. *Conflict of interest (COI)* is defined as involvement in a business, partnership, consulting position, professional society, or a rewarding arrangement that could influence the deliberations or actions of the individual involved with ASGE activities. Although it

is not possible to define all situations, a conflict of interest may be deemed to exist if an independent observer might reasonably question whether a decision made by the individual on behalf of the Society may have been influenced by consideration of their own financial or professional interest.

B. An ASGE *leadership role* is defined as an Officer, Board member, or Committee/Task Force Chair.

Financial Interests or Relationships Requiring Disclosure

A. A *financial* conflict of interest may exist when the individual, their spouse, partner, or dependent, has relevant and material involvement with a health care firm, device or equipment firm, or pharmaceutical firm, as defined by one of the following activities or roles:

1. Services provided as a consultant, advisory committee member or lecturer for which remuneration from the firm was received within the 12 month period preceding the disclosure or is anticipated within one year following disclosure. For the purposes of this policy, remuneration includes salary, consulting fees, honoraria, paid authorship, royalties, or equity interest (stock, stock options, ownership interest) paid directly by the firm.
2. Current officer, board member, trustee, owner or employee of the firm.
3. Possession of equities in the firm, including those of a self-directed pension plan.
4. Patent possession or pending for an endoscopically-related device or technology.
5. Grants received or pending for research, education, product development, or promotional materials.

B. It is a *professional* conflict of interest for any individual who accepts a leadership role in ASGE to hold or accept a leadership position in another professional national or international gastroenterology society, including the American Gastroenterological Association, the American College of Gastroenterology, the American Association for the Study of Liver Disease, and the Society of American Gastrointestinal and Endoscopic Surgeons. It is expected that anyone who accepts a leadership position in ASGE will relinquish all leadership positions in these societies, including appointments to a governing body or board, committee chair positions, and as trustees, governors or any

other positions that may influence the direction and mission of the society.

C. All ASGE Governing Board, Committee, and Task Force members are expected to avoid any activity performed on behalf of the Society which has the potential to result in personal gain for themselves or members of their family except for paid activities approved by the Governing Board such as speaker or officer honoraria.

Conflict of Interest Exclusions

1. A member's relationship and income with their own private practice or other practice associations engaged in patient care does not constitute a conflict of interest and need not be disclosed unless that practice is doing business with ASGE.
2. Disclosure is not required for income from investment vehicles in which the member does not directly control the investment decisions, such as retirement accounts and mutual funds.
3. Disclosure is not required for income from seminars, lectures, teaching engagements, or advisory boards provided to a university, hospital, professional medical society, publisher, or certified medical education provider unless the entity is doing business with ASGE.

General Policies and Procedures

1. As part of the appointment process and renewed after appointment at least annually, an **ASGE Conflict of Interest Disclosure** will be distributed to all participants in ASGE activities, including the Governing Board, Committees and Task Forces, courses and meetings.
2. Members must complete, sign, and return the disclosure statement to the ASGE administration offices irrespective of whether a conflict of interest is perceived.
3. If the participant fails to disclose a conflict of interest that is subsequently discovered and deemed relevant, the Society may take disciplinary action.
4. The disclosure should reveal the nature of all possible conflicts of interest.
5. Potential conflicts of interest will be forwarded for review by the appropriate chairperson, Secretary, or President, as detailed below, who will make a determination as to whether a relevant conflict of interest exists and, if so, the scope of activities from

which the participant must be excluded. The following are general mechanisms to resolve potential conflicts of interest:

- a. Disclosure of conflicts prior to relevant decisions, presentations, activities, or discussions.
- b. Recusal from the discussion and decision-making process.
- c. Inclusion in the discussion but recusal from the decision-making process.
- d. Removal of the individual from the decision-making body or activity.

Specific Procedures:

A. ASGE Governing Board

All ASGE Governing Board members and *ex officio* members must submit an **ASGE Conflict of Interest Disclosure** to the Secretary and President prior to each Governing Board meeting. When a conflict of interest is thought to exist by both the Secretary and President, the member will not be permitted to vote on any actions related to this conflict. The President will determine whether the individual may participate in discussion on matters related to the conflict and will notify the Secretary of this determination. If participation is deemed inappropriate by the President and Secretary, the member will leave the room for the discussion and vote. The minutes will reflect that the member did not participate in the discussion or vote. If the President and Secretary determine that the member may participate in the discussion, disclosure of the conflict of interest will be made to other Governing Board members in attendance prior to board discussion with permission of the conflicted member. If the conflicted member does not assent to disclosure to the board, the member will leave the room for the discussion and vote. The Secretary and President will review and adjudicate each other's disclosure statements. If the Secretary and President disagree on the adjudication of the perceived conflict of interest of a board member or each other, the issue will be decided by a majority vote of non-conflicted members of the ASGE Governing Board Executive Committee.

B. ASGE Committees and Task Force Activities

Prospective members of ASGE Committees and Task Forces must submit an **ASGE Conflict of Interest Disclosure** to the President-elect or President as part of the

appointment process. The importance and relevance of possible conflicts of interest should be weighed prior to final appointment. After appointment, all members of committees and task forces must submit a disclosure form at least annually to the chairperson. The chairperson will submit his/her disclosure statement to the Secretary. It is incumbent upon committee members to inform the chairperson of any new potential conflicts that arise subsequent to written disclosures. When a conflict of interest of a committee or task force member is thought to exist by the chairperson, the member will not be permitted to vote on any actions related to this conflict. The chairperson will determine whether the individual with a perceived conflict of interest may participate in discussion on matters related to the conflict. If participation in the committee discussion is deemed inappropriate by the chairperson, the member will leave the room for the discussion and vote. The minutes will reflect that the member did not participate in the discussion or vote. If the chairperson determines that the member may participate in the discussion, disclosure of the conflict of interest will be made with permission of the conflicted member to other committee and task force members in attendance prior to discussion. If the conflicted member does not assent to disclosure to the committee, the member will leave the room for the discussion and vote. The Secretary will review and adjudicate the chairperson's disclosure statement.

C. ASGE CME Educational Activities

A conflict of interest exists when an individual has both a financial relationship with a commercial interest and the opportunity to affect the content of the CME program, potentially introducing commercial bias. Any member participating in an ASGE-sponsored CME educational activity, including faculty, planning committee, or review group, must complete an **ASGE Conflict of Interest Disclosure** as well as **Attestation Form** during the planning stages of the activity. Members refusing to provide disclosure will not be allowed to participate in the educational activity. Potential conflicts will be managed in accordance with the **CME Programs Committee Conflict of Interest Resolution Policy**. Relevant faculty conflicts will be presented to participants prior to the CME activity.

D. Annual Scientific Meeting Abstracts, Posters and Oral Presentations

For the ASGE Annual Scientific Meeting (DDW[®]), every attempt will be made to achieve fairness and impartiality in the selection process for abstracts, oral and audio-visual presentations, and posters. In accordance with DDW policy, all authors must complete a financial disclosure at the time of abstract submission. Submitting authors will not be allowed to submit disclosures on behalf of a co-author. It is the responsibility of the author to ensure that all co-authors submit their disclosures. The sources of research support and other potential conflicts will be revealed to the review committee prior to review, scoring, and program selection and denoted in the abstract. Commercial support does not exclude submissions for presentation at the annual meeting.

Selection committee voting members will score and select presentations without knowledge of the authors or institution. A committee member should neither discuss nor vote upon his/her own abstract nor vote upon a competing presentation. It is the responsibility of the chair of the Annual Scientific Program Committee, a non-scoring member of the committees who is provided the names of the authors and institutions of submitted presentation prior to the program planning meeting, to make sure that this is carried out fairly.

E. Publications and Educational Product Development

1. Gastrointestinal Endoscopy (GIE)

Actual or perceived conflicts of interest may compromise all aspects of scientific publication, including research validity, interpretation and presentation of data and results, and editorial review. It is imperative that actual or perceived conflicts be identified and resolved in order to preserve the integrity of the ASGE's journal, GIE and, most importantly, to protect the interests of patients. All Editors and Editorial Board members, authors and reviewers for GIE must disclose actual or potential COI, which will be reported and resolved in accordance with the ASGE policy **Conflict of Interest Principles for *Gastrointestinal Endoscopy***. GIE and the ASGE adhere to the "Uniform Requirements for Manuscripts Submitted to Biomedical Journals" (International Committee of Medical Journal Editors. Updated October 2008. <http://www.icmje.org/>).

2. ASGE Publications and Educational Product Development Excluding GIE

Conflicts or interests must be disclosed and resolved for all individuals involved with the development of educational products or ASGE publications in accordance with the ASGE policy **Conflicts of Interest Principles for ASGE Publications and Educational Product Development excluding Gastrointestinal Endoscopy and CME Activity**.