



## **American Board of Psychiatry and Neurology, Inc.**

A Member Board of the American Board of Medical Specialties (ABMS)

### **Conflict of Interest/Disclosure Policies and Procedures for ABPN Faculty Innovation in Education and Research Award Applicants**

#### **Background**

In order to maintain the confidence of the public and the medical profession in the integrity of the Board, it is important for those doing its work to avoid certain activities that could provide the opportunity for an actual conflict of interest or the appearance thereof.

A conflict of interest is defined as an instance wherein a competing outside activity or holding could influence or appears to influence the Board's activities in the areas of policy development; decisions whether to enter into a transaction, relationship or arrangement with third parties; evaluation of training programs; or examination development. Examples of such competing outside interests are compensated direct employment, paid or unpaid advisory or consultant positions, significant personal investments, or affiliations as an officer and/or director in a pharmaceutical, medical supply company or any other relevant entity.

As an alternative to regulating investment or employment, the Board has chosen to manage matters related to the appearance of a conflict of interest by encouraging disclosure of significant financial interests or relationships and abstention from participation in decision-making related to a matter that could give rise to a conflict of interest (due to a material financial interest or relationship).

A second type of possible conflict of interest concerns participation in board review courses or publication of board review preparation materials. The American Board of Psychiatry and Neurology, Inc. (ABPN) supports education in psychiatry and neurology, such as the usual training provided in ACGME-accredited residency programs and in general continuing medical education courses sponsored by specialty societies and similar groups. However, to assure that no implied or perceived bias is introduced into the certification process, individuals who participate in any way in activities that specifically are labeled or marketed as test preparation programs for any ABPN examination are disqualified from serving as an ABPN faculty fellow.

A third type of possible conflict of interest concerns participation in Maintenance of Certification components or modules outside of the Board. The ABPN would consider participation in the development of MOC Self-Assessment examination in psychiatry, neurology, or any of the ABPN subspecialties a conflict of interest.

In addition, the Board maintains that faculty fellows must be certified by the ABPN and fully maintain their certification.

#### **Policy**

It is the policy of the Board that its faculty fellows disclose any potential conflict of interest and attest to meeting eligibility requirements for board certification and licensure.

While the ABPN does not attempt to describe all possible conflicts of interest that could develop, the following are examples the ABPN has identified as potential or apparent conflicts of interest:

- A. Significant financial holdings in any pharmaceutical or medical supply company or any other entity with which the ABPN has an investment, transaction or arrangement. A person has a financial interest if the person has, directly or indirectly, through business, investment, or family<sup>1</sup>:
1. an ownership or investment interest, or
  2. a compensation arrangement, or
  3. a potential ownership or investment interest in, or compensation arrangement with, any entity with which the ABPN has an investment, transaction or arrangement.

Compensation includes direct and indirect remuneration as well as gifts or favors that are substantial in nature.

- B. An affiliation in the capacity of trustee, officer, director, or other major capacity with any pharmaceutical or medical supply company or any other entity with which the ABPN has an investment, transaction or arrangement.
- C. Any other affiliations that would present a potential or apparent conflict of interest or commitment.
- D. Copying, reproducing, or disclosing (orally or in any media) examination materials or content.
- E. Participation in a review course which is publicized as being, or which could be construed as being, a Board review course in psychiatry, neurology, or any of their subspecialties.
- F. Editing, writing, or illustrating in any media (enduring material) identified primarily as preparation for Board examination in psychiatry, neurology, or any of the ABPN's subspecialties. **NOTE: It is recognized that textbooks, monographs, and publications in journals can and will be used as preparation for board examinations. It is only involvement with those that are overtly and primarily identified and sold as coaching instruments to pass board examinations that are considered by ABPN as constituting a conflict of interest.**
- G. Serving as a consultant/site visitor to Alternate Pathway Programs inside or outside the United States.
- H. Participation in the development of written or computerized examinations given by other psychiatry or neurology organizations for 'certification' or 'in residency training examinations'.
- I. Participation as a member of the board of directors of another examining organization in psychiatry or neurology.

Any individual who discloses one of the aforementioned (E-I) should not participate as an ABPN faculty fellow. If there is any question as to whether materials might be construed as being intended for ABPN examinations, the Board office shall be contacted for a decision. This policy is in no way intended to interdict normal educational activities in residency programs.

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<sup>1</sup> The "family" of any individual shall include only his or her spouse; his or her siblings and their spouses; his or her ancestors; and his or her descendants and their spouses.

## **Procedures**

ABPN faculty fellows shall annually sign a statement that affirms such person:

- A. has received a copy of the Conflict of Interest Policy,
- B. has read and understands the policy,
- C. has agreed to comply with the policy, and
- D. understands that the ABPN is a non-profit organization and that in order to maintain its federal tax exemption it must engage primarily in activities which accomplish one or more of its tax-exempt purposes.

Disclosure forms for ABPN faculty fellows will be submitted annually. Any forms reporting a potential conflict will be submitted to the Standing Committee on Conflict of Interest for adjudication.

Any concerns regarding a potential conflict of interest resulting from the submitted reports will be evaluated and acted upon by the Board. The information on all submitted forms will be kept confidential.

## **Violations of the Conflict of Interest Policy**

If the Standing Committee on Conflict of Interest has reasonable cause to believe that an ABPN faculty fellow has failed to disclose actual or possible conflicts of interest, it shall inform that individual of the basis for such belief and afford the individual an opportunity to explain the alleged failure to disclose. If, after hearing the response of the individual and making such further investigation as may be warranted in the circumstances, the Standing Committee on Conflicts of Interest determines that the individual has in fact intentionally failed to disclose an actual or possible conflict of interest, it shall take appropriate disciplinary and corrective action.