



## American Board of Psychiatry and Neurology, Inc.

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

### CONFLICTS OF INTEREST / DISCLOSURE & MANAGEMENT POLICIES AND PROCEDURES

#### **Background**

Members of the Board are expected to have the Mission of the Board as their primary interest when contributing to or participating in the Board's work. 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 a perceived or actual conflict of interest. For similar reasons, it is important for those engaged in the Board's work to regularly disclose outside financial interests that might pose perceived or actual conflicts of interest, and for the Board to have clear policies governing the disclosure and management (when necessary) of such financial interests, recognizing that not all such outside financial interests pose a conflict of interest.

#### *Relationships with Industry*

For purposes of this document, "Industry" is defined as any for-profit company in the pharmaceutical, medical device, biotechnology, or hospital equipment and supplies industries, or any other known entity with which the ABPN has an investment, transaction, or formal arrangement. It does *not* include federal, state, or local government agencies, nor does it include non-profit academic health centers or their constituent entities.

One type of potential conflict of interest is defined as an instance of a relationship with Industry that could influence or appears to influence the Board's activities, as exemplified by the following areas: 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 potentially competing outside interests are financial or fiduciary relationships such as: compensation or payments of any type, directly or indirectly, including (but not limited to): direct employment; paid advisory or consultant work; gifts of any tangible value; and equity interests including personal investments in a single stock and also including stock options. Fiduciary relationships include paid or unpaid affiliations as an officer, director, and/or other leadership or advisory/consulting role with an Industry entity. Please note that the requirement to disclose financial interests does *not* include equity in mutual funds that comprise or invest in multiple commercial entities.

Financial and fiduciary relationships of relevance to the Board include those that involve the individual her/himself, their spouse or domestic partner, and/or their domestic children.

The Board manages matters related to such potential conflicts of interest by requiring disclosure of all outside financial and fiduciary interests or relationships; Board leadership determining the nature and extent of the interests and potential conflicts of interest with the Board; and maintaining guidelines for decisions about management including potential recusals or preclusions on participation in Board activities, recognizing that not all Industry financial or fiduciary interests necessarily pose a problematic conflict of interest.

#### *ABPN Board Review Courses and Publications*

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 engaging in Board work, including service as an ABPN Director or committee member.

### *Non-ABPN Continuing Certification Examinations*

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

### **Policy**

It is the policy of the Board that its Directors, officers, employees, committee members, and other personnel engaged in Board work annually disclose any outside financial or fiduciary relationships with Industry, and attest to not participating in excluded board review courses and continuing certification self-assessment examinations.

Regarding financial or fiduciary relationships with Industry: not all such interests are necessarily problematic conflicts of interest. The Board will determine whether such conflicts (actual or perceived) exist and how they are to be managed. Significant fiduciary responsibilities, depending on their nature, may require recusal from discussions regarding mutual or competing interests of the Board and the Industry company, or may require recusal from participation in Board activities entirely. Most financial interests of modest amount may be managed solely by transparent disclosure of such interests; larger interests (>\$25,000 per company) or other factors favoring the actuality or appearance of a conflict of interest may require recusal.

Copying, reproducing, or disclosing (orally or in any media) Board examination materials or content is expressly prohibited, and would preclude any further participation in Board activities.

Participation in any of the following is precluded while participating in Board activities:

- A. 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.
- B. 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.]***
- C. Serving as a consultant/site visitor to Alternate Pathway Programs inside or outside the United States.
- D. Participation in the development of written or computerized examinations given by other psychiatry or neurology organizations for 'certification' or 'continuing [or maintenance of] certification' or 'in residency training examinations'. The person may not serve on any test-writing committees.
- E. Participation as a member of the board of directors of another examining organization in psychiatry or neurology. The person may not serve on any committee.

Any individual who discloses participation in item B from above is precluded from participation in any ABPN work for at least twelve months subsequent to the course or to the cessation of publication of written, electronic, or audiovisual materials. 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 or fellowship programs, nor does it preclude participation in continuing education programs that are not included in the descriptions above.

### **Procedures**

Directors, committee members, and proctors shall annually complete a survey and sign a statement that affirms compliance with the above policies. Results of the surveys will be reviewed by the ABPN President and CEO and if necessary, provided to the standing Committee on Conflict of Interest for adjudication. The results will also be regularly provided to the applicable committee chairs overseeing the work of the committee members with sufficient advance notice to permit management or recusal, as necessary, prior to the committee's work. The Committee on Conflict of Interest will summarize its findings for the Board. Any appeals must first be made to the Committee on Conflict of Interest, and then (if not resolved) will then be brought to the Board for final decision. Other than as stated here, the information on all submitted surveys 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 a Director, President, Committee member, or other person engaged in Board work 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 a requisite interest, it shall take appropriate disciplinary and corrective action.