

# Policy on Conflict of Interest Identification, Mitigation, and Disclosure

The Pennsylvania Medical Society (PAMED) is accredited by the Accreditation Council for Continuing Medical Education (ACCME) to award *AMA PRA Category 1 credit*<sup>™</sup> for physician education. The ACCME has developed guidelines, the Standards for Integrity and Independence in Accredited Continuing Education (hereinafter referred to “ACCME SII” in this document), that all accredited providers are required to follow when awarding CME credit to activities where the content of the activity may include discussions related to products and services used on or consumed by patients. As the accredited provider, PAMED expects that all planners and faculty involved in the Category 1 activities which we both directly and jointly accredit will adhere to the following guidelines.

## Identification of Financial Relationships with Ineligible Companies

The ACCME SII require that anyone in the position to control content of a Category 1 activity disclose all financial relationships with ineligible companies within the past 24 months to assess if there are relevant financial relations which create any potential conflicts of interest. **An ineligible company is defined by the ACCME as any entity whose primary business is producing, marketing, selling, re-selling, or distributing healthcare products used by or on patients.** Any individual that refuses to disclose financial relationships cannot be included in the Category 1 CME activity.

PAMED has a standard online disclosure form that planners, content developers, and faculty for an activity must complete when they first become involved in the planning or delivery of the CME activity in order to collect information on all financial relationships that exist between these individuals and ineligible companies. The data collected through this online form is then evaluated by PAMED CME staff to determine if any relevant financial relationships exist that must be considered for further action.

## Mitigation of Relevant Financial Relationships with Ineligible Companies

The ACCME SII require that accredited providers establish mechanisms to mitigate any identified potential conflicts of interest stemming from relevant financial relationships with ineligible companies. Financial relationships of any dollar amount are defined as relevant if the educational content is related to the business lines or products of the ineligible company. A “conflict of interest” is created when anyone who is in the position to control the content of the activity has a relevant financial relationship(s) with an ineligible company whose product or service is being discussed as part of the educational activity.

The ACCME recognizes that there are a variety of mechanisms and strategies for compliance, and therefore, accredited providers are expected to develop mechanisms that are appropriate for their organizations and activities. PAMED has adopted several mechanisms to mitigate conflict of interest for planning committee members and/or faculty.

Acceptable mitigation actions include the following:

1. Recusal of planning committee members with conflict(s) of interest relating to the content of the educational activity from discussions on topic development, educational objectives, and faculty selection.
2. Peer or expert review of the faculty person’s presentation including PowerPoint slides and any other handouts, if applicable. A content review form must be completed by a designee of the accredited provider or, in the case of a joint provided activity, an agreed-upon subject matter expert identified by the joint provider. Note: In some instances, additional peer review may be required by a member of PAMED’s CME Advisory Panel.
  - A content review form must be completed and on file in the CME office at least two weeks prior to the educational activity verifying that no commercial bias is present.

**If commercial bias is identified, corrective action must be implemented prior to the activity to assure that content is balanced and unbiased.**

3. Modification of the focus of the content of the topic matter so that the content is not related to products or services of the ineligible company that are the basis of the conflict of interest.
4. Limit the presentation to specific topic matter where the financial relationships are not relevant to the educational event.
5. If an individual is a principal investigator of an ineligible company industry-sponsored trial, limitation of the individual's presentation to the data and results of the research and use of another individual to address the broader implications and recommendations for clinical care.
6. Selection of another presenter who does not have a relevant financial relationship to address the preferred topic.
7. Other strategies will be considered on a case-by-case basis and must be approved by PAMED's CME staff prior to the proposed activity.

All CME activities certified for CME credit by PAMED are expected to conform to this policy. **All potential conflicts of interest must be mitigated before an activity occurs.**

- If conflicts of interest stemming from a relevant financial relationship of an ineligible company cannot be resolved, the affected individual cannot participate in the planning, development, or implementation of the activity.
- If PAMED determines that a potential conflict of interest exists based on any disclosed financial relationships, we will work to mitigate that conflict promptly and prior to the activity so the individual(s) can continue in the respective role(s).
- As noted above, PAMED's CME department utilizes a variety of methods to accomplish mitigation of a potential conflict of interest. If you are identified as having a potential conflict of interest, we will contact you to discuss the course of action which will be taken.

### **Disclosure to the Audience of Relevant Financial Relationships with Ineligible Companies**

The ACCME SII require that accredited providers inform learners before they engage in an activity of all relevant financial relationships creating potential conflicts of interest for everyone involved in the planning, development, or delivery of an activity. Likewise, if no relevant financial relationships exist, the accredited provider must inform the learners accordingly. Learners must also be informed that all potential conflicts of interest have been mitigated.

All activities certified for CME credit by PAMED are expected to conform to this requirement by providing a **written** disclosure of this information to learners prior to their engagement in the CME activity. Acceptable options to provide written disclosure include website notifications, emails, activity brochures and announcements, or other handouts learners will review prior to engaging in the activity. Verification of the mechanism used for disclosure to the audience must be on file in PAMED's CME office prior to the start/launch of the CME activity.