



**Canadian
Cardiovascular
Society**

Leadership. Knowledge. Community.

**Société
canadienne
de cardiologie**

Communauté. Connaissances. Leadership.

Canadian Cardiovascular Society

Conflict of Interest Guidelines

INTRODUCTION:

The governing ethical principles of the Canadian Cardiovascular Society are honesty, beneficence, non-maleficence, justice and equity. A conflict of interest can arise when any choice is made. The purpose of these guidelines is to indicate to members and employees of the Society, minimal standards of behavior, vis-à-vis conflicts of interest.

Definition: Conflict of interest arises when an individual or organization considers choices in which conflicting interests or benefits exist. A duality of commitments exists. Conflict is present when the choice which provides personal benefit is selected over the choice most in accord with the above ethical principles and public interest. Such conflicts may involve financial benefits, enhancement of position, or other benefits to the individual. Disclosure of such conflicts prior to the process of choice is essential. Disclosure however per se, is inadequate if other means are used to inappropriately influence decision-making. Members and employees of the Canadian Cardiovascular Society are in a position of trust in fostering the goals and objectives of the Society.

GUIDELINES:

- 1) Given the mission of the Canadian Cardiovascular Society, the Society should not exploit its reputation which is a public trust, by engaging in commercial ventures to solely benefit the Society. Such commercial ventures may limit the capability of the Society to enunciate policy, which would be beneficial to the public's cardiovascular health.
- 2) The Canadian Cardiovascular Society should avoid endorsements of organizations or individuals where such endorsements may be exploited for gains which when known, would damage the reputation of the Canadian Cardiovascular Society.
An example of such an occurrence would be the organization endorsing a specific product where the evidence that it was beneficial for cardiovascular

health above other products, was insufficient. Such an activity would damage the reputation of the Society.

- 3) All proceedings, notes, lists, etc. which are part of the function of the Canadian Cardiovascular Society are the property of the Society and must be retained by the Society and must be retained by the Society office after the individual is no longer in position of trust in the Society. This particularly applies to executives and staff of the Society.
- 4) Individual members of the Society, staff, or executives may not use information gained during the course of the Society's business for personal gain. Where an individual has gained proprietary information concerning the functioning of the society, such information and/or skills may not be used by that individual to gain employment or hold office, based on the information, for a period of at least three years following separation from the Society.
- 5) Executives and staff must indicate in writing all affiliations with other bodies who do business with the Canadian Cardiovascular Society, particularly if these affiliations provide a personal benefit unknown to the Society and others. This includes being an officer in a company, holding stock, consulting agreements and other activities which would benefit the individual or those associated with the individual, while the person is in a position of fiduciary trust with the Canadian Cardiovascular Society.
- 6) Members, executives and staff in the course of presenting either at meetings or as representatives of the Society have an obligation to make it known that there is a dual commitment on their part. That is, by communicating the information, they will or may receive an unknown personal benefit. The audience has a right to know when such potential conflict of interest exists.

Compliance with this guideline applies to those presenting at Canadian Cardiovascular Society meeting or when representing the Society. They must indicate that the potential conflict of interest exists at the time of the presentation. The existence of a potential bias which results from either real or potential personal benefit, or support for research is part of the information required by the audience for their evaluation of the presentation. All members and guests presenting at meetings of the CCS or those meetings sponsored by the Society must sign a declaration indicating that they will provide this information to the audience in an unequivocal manner.

A PROCESS FOR MAINTAINING CONFORMITY WITH GUIDELINES:

The Executive Committee, staff and members of the Canadian Cardiovascular Society have a fiduciary obligation to maintain ethical behavior during the course of their affiliation with the Society. They are in a position of trust in dealing with conflict of interest. The Executive and Ethics Committees are responsible for assuring that adherence to these guidelines occur.

During the course of engaging in the Society's business, if a failure to adhere to these guidelines occurs, it should be brought to the attention of the Executive and the Ethics Committee of the Society. They shall act as the recipients of such complaints. The ethics committee will have the responsibility of setting up a review process based upon natural justice and confidentiality to investigate the validity of any complaint. The executives shall be informed concerning the investigation. Funds to perform the investigation will be made available by the treasurer from the budget of the Society. If an action is recommended as a result of the investigation, the Executive and subsequently the membership at the annual meeting must approve it. Sanctions from the Executive for failure to adhere to the guidelines may include expulsion from the Society and publication of the Ethics Committee's findings. Approval for sanction will be held by a simple majority of a quorum. It is the responsibility of the chair of the Ethics Committee to monitor the process and to recommend changes in the guidelines to make them more effective based upon the experiences of the Society.

STATEMENT RE: CONFLICT OF INTEREST POLICY

I have read the Guidelines on Conflict of Interest adopted by the Canadian Cardiovascular Society in September 1998.

I understand in particular that Society staff and Society members acting on behalf of the CCS must indicate in writing all affiliations with other bodies who do business with the CCS, particularly if these affiliations provide a personal benefit to such individuals. This includes being an officer or holding stock in such a company, consulting agreements and other activities that would benefit the individual, or those associated with the individual, while the person is in a position of fiduciary trust with the Canadian Cardiovascular Society.

I accept the Conflict of Interest Guidelines and confirm that I am in compliance with them at this time (unless otherwise noted below). I will abide by these guidelines while representing the Canadian Cardiovascular Society. Should a conflict of interest on my part arise, I will promptly notify in writing the Secretary of the Society.

Name: _____
(Please Print)

Signed: _____

Date: _____

