

North American Society for Pediatric Gastroenterology, Hepatology and Nutrition (NASPGHAN) Policy on Resolution of Conflict of Interest for Officers and Committees

NASPGHAN Mission Statement.

The mission of the North American Society for Pediatric Gastroenterology, Hepatology and Nutrition (NASPGHAN) is to be a world leader in advancing the science and clinical practice of Pediatric Gastroenterology, Hepatology and Nutrition in health and disease.

Preamble.

NASPGHAN has gained considerable respect as a leading authority in the field of pediatric gastroenterology, hepatology and nutrition from other scientific and professional organizations, the health care industry and governmental organizations involved in health care. NASPGHAN has also gained public trust in the promotion of the health and well being of infants, children and adolescents with disorders of the digestive system and nutrition. The maintenance of this respect and the public trust in NASPGHAN's integrity, credibility and ethical standards are of paramount importance to the Society in order for it to continue to accomplish its mission. This policy document is designed to serve as a general guide to identify and manage conflicts of interest in the governance, development of practice guidelines, or the performance of committee activities. NASPGHAN's "Policy on Conflict of Interest and Relationships with Industry and Other Organizations" defines Conflict of Interest and the rules for disclosure. The current document specifically addresses Conflicts of Interest policy relating to officers and committee members of the Society.

- All NASGHAN officers, members of the Executive Council, members of committees and task forces, consultants, and others acting on behalf of the Society will honor their duty of loyalty to the Society by:
 - Avoiding the influence of conflicting interests when making decisions or acting in any other manner on behalf of the Society,
 - Preserving the confidentiality of all information respecting the Society that is not generally known to the public or others who might benefit personally from its disclosure or use, and
 - Not appropriating to themselves or competing with the Society for opportunities that would be in the best interests of the Society to pursue.

1. Policy on Resolution of Conflict of Interest for Officers and Committee members.

1.1 Principle.

Decisions by council members, committee chairs, and committee members on behalf of NASPGHAN are ethically defensible, socially responsible and free from bias or commercial influence.

1.2 Policy and Procedure

1.2.1. Introduction.

Scholarly statements, publications, and recommendations issued by NASPGHAN have implications for the practice of pediatric gastroenterology throughout the world. Although it is assumed that all officers, committee members and others acting on behalf of NASPGHAN act honestly and with integrity when making recommendations concerning NASPGHAN policies and actions, there are potential and real conflicts of interest which may impact an individual's opinion or may appear to make that opinion self-serving, or might not allow for impartial objective determinations. Potential conflicts of interest are situations which might not allow for impartial or objective determinations. These situations include, but are not limited to, relationships with industries or businesses that manufacture, sell or distribute products, devices, nutritionals or pharmaceuticals. Potential conflicts include, among others, receipt of research support or lecture honoraria from such companies. NASPGHAN does not wish to exclude individuals who are experts in given fields from participation in policy formulation and recommendations or other activities on behalf of the NASPGHAN, merely because they have potential conflicts of interest due to their expertise. However, the validity of NASPGHAN recommendations and its reputation are based on the confidence in its integrity and the belief by members and the public alike that policies are unbiased and based only on concerns for the best interests of children, their families, and their health care providers. Thus NASPGHAN has adopted the following policy concerning disclosure and resolution of potential and real conflicts of interest:

1. NASPGHAN welcomes energetic, lively and open discussion of all points of view in the formulation of policies and recommendations at all levels in the organization.
2. NASPGHAN policies, the statements of its committees, and all other NASPGHAN communications on matters relating to promotion of the health and well being of infants, children and adolescents with disorders of the digestive system and nutrition as well as to the practice of pediatric gastroenterology and the recommendations of its task forces, etc., should be as free as possible from personal bias and outside influence.

1.2.2. Policy on Conflict of Interest for Executive Officers, Council Members, Committee Chairs, and Nominating Committee Members.

All NASPGHAN officers, NASPGHAN Council members, Committee Chairs, and Nominating Committee Members, and designees must declare potential conflicts of interest for the previous twelve months before accepting a position and describe how they will resolve conflicts of interest prior to starting their term of service. By accepting the position, the member affirms compliance with any conditions or restrictions imposed by NASPGHAN to manage, reduce, or eliminate any conflict of interest in accordance with NASPGHAN's "Policy on Conflict of Interest and Relationships with Industry and Other Organizations". Conflict of interest disclosure forms will be updated annually or as an individual's situation changes. If, a new real or potential conflict of interest occurs during a term in office, the conflict must be disclosed to the NASPGHAN national office and resolved promptly in collaboration with the Committee Chair, NASPGHAN Executive Council or a NASPGHAN officer.

2. Policy on Resolution of Conflict of Interest for Clinical Practice Guidelines Committee Members.

2.1. Principle.

NASPGHAN must ensure all Clinical Practice Guidelines endorsed by the Society are scientifically rigorous, ethically defensible, socially responsible and free from bias or commercial influence.

2.2 Policy and Procedure.

- The NASPGHAN Council is responsible for assuring that all publications endorsed by the Society are scientifically acceptable and free from potential conflict of interest. This process will begin with the selection of the Practice Guidelines Committee. Protection against the appearance of conflicts of interest and maintenance of the integrity of the process requires that potential members involved in the preparation of these documents should have no unresolvable interests or affiliations that might compromise the integrity of the final document.
- Practice Guidelines Committee Members should disclose and resolve any real or potential conflicts of interest as defined by the NASPGHAN Policy on Conflict of Interest and Relationships with Industry and Other Organizations prior to starting their term of service. By accepting the position, the member affirms compliance with any conditions or restrictions imposed by NASPGHAN to manage, reduce, or eliminate any conflict of interest in accordance with NASPGHAN's "Policy on Conflict of Interest and Relationships with Industry and Other Organizations". Conflict of interest disclosure forms will be updated annually or as an individual's situation changes. If a new real or potential conflict of interest occurs during appointment on a Guideline Committee, the conflict must be disclosed and resolved by notification of the Guideline Committee Chair and the NASPGHAN President.
- Practice Guidelines should not be publicized or shared with other parties including those in government or industry until it has been reviewed and approved by the NASPGHAN Council. If the manuscript is to be published in JPGN, the Editor-in-chief must also grant permission for a manuscript that has been reviewed and accepted for publication to be disseminated prior to actual publication.
- NASPGHAN will not use funds from industry for the purposes of producing a clinical practice guideline.
- Published guidelines must include a disclosure statement and resolution process where necessary for all authors.

3. Policy on Resolution of Conflict of Interest and Due Process for Ethics Violations

3.1. Principle.

NASPGHAN must ensure that all committee activities are ethically defensible, socially responsible and free from bias or commercial influence.

3.2 Policy and Procedure.

In the event a complaint is lodged regarding an alleged conflict of interest for any Society endorsed Practice Guideline or publication, the NASPGHAN President will either refer the matter to the Ethics Committee, or appoint an ad hoc committee of no less than three members, to review the complaint. The findings and recommendations of the investigating committee will be referred to Council who shall have the final say in the matter. (See NASPGHAN Policy on Due Process for Ethics Violations).