

## THE AMERICAN BOARD OF DERMATOLOGY, INC. CONFLICT OF INTEREST POLICY

In general, the activities of the American Board of Dermatology are not likely to place an officer, director, or executive staff member of the Board in real or potential conflict with other responsibilities or interests such individuals may already have. The Board has identified the areas of concern that involve the preparation and collection of test questions in the form for the Principles of Confidentiality for Preparation of Examinations, which is executed annually by the directors, test committee members, and executive staff. In addition, however, there is the remote possibility that the Board's officers, directors, test committee members, and staff may have membership or hold positions in other organizations or companies, or have financial interests that could pose conflicts of interest in relation to their responsibilities with the Board. Such conflicts are usually financial in nature but could also be philosophic and inconsistent with the mission of the Board, thus making difficult decision-making and the conscientious performance of the work of the Board. It is important to realize that the appearance alone of a conflict of interest may at times represent a problem even though a real conflict does not exist.

Because the existence of such conflicts of interest is so unlikely, the Board does not require completion of Conflict of Interest disclosure forms by the officers, directors, test committee members, or staff. However, it will circulate annually to these individuals this Conflict of Interest policy statement which includes general guidelines intended to identify areas in which such conflicts could occur and thus heighten the sensitivity of the Board to the possible existence of relevant problems. It is emphasized that involvement with other organizations or companies, or the holding of financial interests that are irrelevant, i.e., are not significantly related to the activities of the American Board of Dermatology, are not to be considered consequential in relation to these guidelines.

For the purposes of personal review, therefore, the officers, directors, test committee members, and staff should consider the possibility of a conflict of interest when there is/are:

- 1) Direct or indirect involvement with any organization or company that
  - deals economically with the ABD.
  - could benefit substantially from activities or programs directed by or carried out by the ABD.
  - has objectives inconsistent with the purposes of the ABD.
- 2) Significant financial interest in, or significant compensation in the form of salary, consultant fees, honoraria, or grants from a company or institution that could benefit from or influence the activities of the ABD.
- 3) Holdings or rights to a patent, issued, proposed, or pending on any item or equipment related to the activities of the ABD.

If, after reviewing the above, the individual has any question as to a possible conflict of interest, he or she can review the matter with the Executive Director or the President of the Board. If no conflict, real or potential is recognized, no action, such as completion of disclosure form, abstention or divestiture, or withdrawal from discussion or voting on related issues at Board meetings, is required. The Board is thus relying on the good character and altruism of its officers, directors and staff to avoid conflicts and if in their opinion such conflicts may exist to disclose them or deal with them properly so that they do not interfere with their Board responsibilities.

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Principles of Confidentiality for Preparation of the Examinations

It is essential that Directors of the Board and other members of all Test Committees maintain high standards of confidentiality in relation to the procedures and examinations of the Board. In order to do so, the American Board of Dermatology requires the Directors of the Board and other members of the Test Committees to agree to conform to the following standards of conduct:

1. Hold all matters related to the preparation and selection of questions and visual materials to be used on the examinations completely confidential, disclosing no information to anyone outside your Test Committee.
2. Not participate as a presenter, organizer, director or chairman, or in an advisory capacity for any dermatology review course during and for two (2) years after completion of your term on the Test Committee. For purposes of this agreement, the designation "review course" is interpreted as meaning any course designed primarily for residents or dermatologists in preparation for an examination of the ABD. This includes any comprehensive symposia, self-assessment programs considered preparatory for an examination. Identification with publications, such as board review manuals, audio-visual material, training examinations or computer-based educational programs used for this purpose should be similarly avoided. Single lectures, seminars, or workshops limited to current developments in dermatology and discussion of material that is on the ABD website or in the public domain would not be included in this definition.
3. Use the greatest caution and judgment in the use of materials in single lectures, seminars, and workshops to avoid giving any impression of an unfair advantage to any participants who might be contemplating Board certification in the near future.
4. It is particularly important for members of the faculty of teaching programs to avoid any comments that might be construed as "inside" information regarding the contents of the examination.

I have read and agree to abide by the conditions of confidentiality and conflict of interest policy.

Return form via e-mail to the American Board of Dermatology: [abderm@hfhs.org](mailto:abderm@hfhs.org)

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