

Cervical Spine Research Society  
Conflict of Interest and Industry Relationships Policy

The Cervical Spine Research Society (CSRS) is a multidisciplinary organization with a focus on disorders of the cervical spine. With its origin in 1973, the CSRS provides a forum for the exchange of ideas and promotes clinical and basic science research of the cervical spine. The organization values collegial interaction and strong scientific principles.

The CSRS strongly encourages full and complete disclosure of any conflicts, or potential conflicts, of interest by its officers, members, and guests. The meetings of the CSRS are well recognized for exemplary discussion sessions and it is essential that members of the audience are apprised of any conflicts of interest. In this manner, the audience member can weigh the evidence presented by the speaker or discussant in a fair and rational way to come to his or her own personal conclusions.

In accordance with other medical organizations the CSRS has developed a policy with respect to potential conflicts of interest and on industry relationships. The area of concern is first defined and then specific criteria are delineated to clarify what is expected of both the officers and the members of the organization.

**Definition- Conflict of Interest:** A personal or financial interest or conflicting fiduciary obligation that may introduce or be perceived to introduce bias. A Conflict of Interest may impact the decision making process of a CSRS officer, a CSRS Executive Committee member, members of CSRS standing committees, or general members of the CSRS. A Conflict of Interest may also introduce bias into oral or written scientific communications and extemporaneous questions and comments presented during the Annual Meeting or an Instructional Course.

All persons addressing the membership of the CSRS, either from the podium or from the floor in commenting on a paper or presentation, should identify any disclosable conflicts of interest or potential conflicts of interest they may have. The mechanism by which potential conflicts of interest are identified will be clarified at the annual meeting. A disclosable interest is any personal or financial interest or constituent affiliation that a reasonable physician would consider relevant to the evaluation of the speaker's comments. Potential conflicts of interest should include any research or institutional support, any stock or stock options held, any consulting or employee relationships, any royalties, any commercially derived honoraria, any positions of significant influence in other organized medical or surgical societies, or any other non-research related funding such as paid travel. These potential conflicts of interest are applicable to the CSRS member as well as any of his or her immediate family members.

All educational and research activities of the CSRS will abide by Federal laws and the Accreditation Council for Continuing Medical Education (ACCME) "Standards for Commercial Support" to ensure the independence of CME activities. The CSRS will

strive to make all educational and research programs free of bias. Specifically, while financial support from industry partners is helpful in developing many of the programmatic initiatives for the CSRS, there will be no influence from industry representatives into the content of the Annual Meeting, Instructional Courses or any other CME approved activity. Any and all contributions solicited from industry partners will be obtained with this policy expressly stated. To make the deliberations of CSRS committees more open, and encourage broader dialogue, industry partners may be provided with ex-officio seats on the Research, Patient Education, and Continuing Education committees. Industry representatives may observe and make comments during all deliberations of these committees, but they will have no vote.

All members of the CSRS Executive Committee and all members of any standing CSRS committees or task forces shall annually complete a written financial disclosure statement that is available for review by any interested member of the society. The financial disclosure statement shall clearly detail any conflicts or potential conflicts of interest that may exist. Members who will be making a presentation from the podium, as either an invited or an accepted talk, shall be asked to complete a financial disclosure statement as well.

A copy of the CSRS's conflict of interest policy shall be sent annually to each person appointed to a CSRS committee or other appointed body. Written confirmation that the proposed committee member has read, and agrees to abide by, the policy will be required prior to the appointment being official.

Members of the CSRS Executive Committee or any standing CSRS committees or task forces are required to disclose any potential conflicts of interest prior to any vote by the committee. In certain situations, the individual physician may choose to recuse or abstain from the voting process if the conflict makes it impossible, or highly improbable, to render a decision which is either non-biased or which has the potential appearance of bias.

Members may not use CSRS resources (other than those intended for general member benefit) or confidential information obtained in their CSRS roles to benefit their personal business, other societal or journal interests, or commercial activities. Members may not use or permit the use of any CSRS title they hold for public solicitation or advertisement of business or commercial activities; however, this prohibition does not apply to professional resumes.

Members of the CSRS Executive Committee must disclose any conflicts of interest or potential conflicts of interest at each formal meeting of the Executive Committee. A written financial disclosure statement must be signed and this document will be a part of the minutes of the meeting. In addition, each CSRS Executive Committee officer shall execute annually a Compliance Statement, confirming that, to his or her knowledge, the officer has complied with the Conflict of Interest Policy. The Secretary of the CSRS will be responsible for obtaining executed Compliance Statements.

If any CSRS member has reasonable cause to believe that another member has violated the Conflict of Interest Policy and brings that concern to the attention of a member of the Executive Committee, then the Executive Committee member must inform the President of the CSRS and the Chairperson of the Ethics Committee of this situation. The CSRS Executive Committee will then include discussion of this scenario at its next scheduled meeting. The accused member will be informed of the challenge and its basis and afforded the opportunity to respond. Any decisions rendered by the Executive Committee in these matters will be as dictated by the Bylaws of the CSRS.