

# American Thyroid Association

## Corporate Relationships Guiding Principles



The American Thyroid Association (ATA) recognizes that appropriate and transparent relationships with industry offer important benefits for the field and for the public we serve. Collaborations with industry partners permit the ATA to expand its programs significantly in the service of its mission of “devotion to thyroid biology and to the prevention and treatment of thyroid disease through excellence in research, clinical care, education, and public health” as well as our stated values of:

- Scientific inquiry
- Clinical excellence
- Public service
- Patient advocacy
- Education
- Worldwide collaboration and collegiality
- Ethical conduct

Within the realm of the ATA mission and conflict of interest policy, Industry and Corporate relationships are viewed as having the potential to facilitate thoughtful and intellectual communications about research occurring in the field, both within and outside industry and thyroid clinical and surgical practice. The ATA recognizes the importance of all thyroid research; whether developed by industry scientists or academic scientists and the need for continued discoveries in the pharmaceutical and biotech industries.

The American Thyroid Association maintains complete independence between industry support of any and all of its programs and the content development of such programs. In the interest of transparency, the Society has developed the following principles to document its relationship to industry.

The American Thyroid Association actively seeks outside financial or in-kind support for specific programs that further its fundamental goal of providing the highest quality education and professional development for endocrinologists. The American Thyroid Association (ATA) serves the public through programs that carry out its mission, vision, values, and goals. Corporate and industry relationships with the ATA are additionally bound by the following:

- ATA Conflict of Interest and Code of Conduct Policy,
- ACCME - the standards established by the Accreditation Council for Continuing Medical Education <http://accme.org/cme-providers>,
- PhRMA code on Interactions with Healthcare Providers <http://www.phrma.org/principles-guidelines/code-on-interactions-with-health-care-professionals>,
- AdvaMed code of ethics <http://advamed.org/issues/code-of-ethics> ,

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- American Medical Association’s Ethical Opinion on CME and Gifts to Physicians [www.ama-assn.org/ama/pub/physician-resources/medical-ethics/code-medical-ethics/opinion90115.page?](http://www.ama-assn.org/ama/pub/physician-resources/medical-ethics/code-medical-ethics/opinion90115.page?),
- Food and Drug Administration regulations regarding Industry-supported Scientific and Educational Activities <http://www.fda.gov/downloads/drugs/guidancecomplianceregulatoryinformation/guidances/ucm070072.pdf> , and the
- Office of Inspector General Compliance Program Guidance for Pharmaceutical Manufacturers <http://oig.hhs.gov/authorities/docs/03/050503FRCPGPharmac.pdf>.

### Purpose and Principles

To further the mission of the American Thyroid Association (ATA) “devotion to thyroid biology and to the prevention and treatment of thyroid disease through excellence in research, clinical care, education, and public health”, productive interactions with other non-profits and for-profit entities are essential. A guiding principle of non-profit organizations is to collaborate and cooperate with public and private entities, casting a wide net of influence and awareness.

As stated in the goals of the ATA [www.thyroid.org/about-american-thyroid-association/](http://www.thyroid.org/about-american-thyroid-association/), we encourage and depend upon broad based support from the public and industry to fulfill our scientific and educational missions. Our efforts in scientific inquiry, clinical excellence, public service, education, collaboration, and collegiality have made us the leading organization focused on thyroid biology and the prevention and treatment of thyroid disorders through excellence and innovation in research, clinical care, education, and public health.

It is in the interest of the ATA to provide a forum for open communication between the ATA and the community of corporations that share interest in thyroid health, disease and biology. In striving to promote discussion about thyroidology among the medical, scientific, and business leadership of related industry partners, the ATA interacts with industry in several ways:

- The Corporate Leadership Council (CLC) meets annually during the ATA Annual Meeting to exchange ideas about current initiatives in thyroid studies and the potential for increased education and new paths in research.
- The Continuing Medical Education of the annual meeting submits grants to support the annual meeting and acknowledges the sponsors in a manner regulated by the ACCME. The list of sponsors is found on one page and on the cover of the program book; as well as signage outside relevant sessions. The extensive guidance from ACCME regarding the letters of agreement (LOA) and sharp restriction of engagement with the content of the program allows the ATA to serve the scientific community with unbiased presentations. Key considerations of the ATA include complete independence in organizing and planning the content development of all educational programs. Appropriate funding of educational programs mandates a sharp divide between potential funding and the decision-making of the program committee. All funding

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proposals are generated from the ATA headquarters' staff within the Accreditation Council for Continuing Medical Education (ACCME) guidelines and regulations; requests are submitted to multiple industry and commercial companies; and, disclosure and processes are transparent to participants and sponsors.

- The commercial areas of the annual meeting in the exhibit hall are open for industry to purchase exhibit booths and explain their products to those attendees who are interested. In the exhibit hall, Expo theater time slots are also sold to industry for product presentation.

#### **Antitrust**

Antitrust: The Sherman Act, the Robinson-Patman Act, the Clayton Act and the FTC Act are among the major federal antitrust laws prohibiting all contracts, combinations or conspiracies to restrain trade. Not-for-profit organizations that improperly deny or expel members, set standards, sponsor certification programs, endorse products or services or otherwise advantage or disadvantage individuals or organizations may find themselves in violation of antitrust laws. Even discussion of collective action, pricing or other issues that could lessen or increase competitive advantage can subject the association to litigation and fines.

Organization officers and directors must maintain control of meetings, at least to the degree that participants do not engage in conversation and/or activities which violate these laws.

#### **Conflicts of Interest**

Conflicts of Interest: State laws define this issue in different ways. However, all of these laws essentially prohibit individuals using their positions in not-for-profit organizations to advantage themselves or anyone other than "the membership." In other words, it must be the organization's purpose and the officer's and director's purposes to serve the "common good" of all or the majority of members, and they must not seek to advantage themselves or any minority at the expense of the majority.

#### **Firewall Policy**

Industry programs and corporate participants agree that there is neither involvement nor exertion of influence on topics or speakers of accredited ATA meetings.