Definition: A conflict of interest exists when person(s) involved in program planning or implementation has personal considerations, which could potentially influence his/her ability to be objective and unbiased in performance of program-related duties. In continuing medical education, the undesirable outcome of “conflict of interest” is typically the introduction/demonstration of a bias in favor of a commercial product in return for personal gain.

Goal: To ensure that such conflicts are resolved* in a manner consistent with the public good. In the context of continuing medical education, the solution could be achieved by eliminating, avoiding, or managing conflicts in such a way that the educational program is designed to be free of commercial bias and is aligned with the public interest.

*Resolve in this context is defined as, to bring the conflict to a “usually successful conclusion” American Heritage Dictionary – Second College Edition

* Personal Gain in this context is defined as a person “securing profit or reward for his or her private business, interests, or activities” American Heritage Dictionary - Second College Edition

Mechanisms for Resolving Conflicts of Interest (COI)

Identification: Identify COIs of Planning Committee, Speakers, Authors, Organizers, Moderators and staff involved in the planning, implementation, and delivery of CME activities. This will be accomplished by using Author/Speaker /Planning Committee/Moderator/Organizer/Staff Financial Disclosure Form provided by the SNMMI. Identification of COI requires initial disclosure of all relevant relationships. The ACCME defines “relevant financial relationships” as financial relationships in any amount occurring within the past 12 months that create a conflict of interest.

- All disclosures will be reviewed by Conflicts of Interests Sub-Committee or Continuing Education Committee Chair for identification of conflicts of interest.
- The Conflicts of Interests Sub-Committee or Continuing Education Committee Chair will document the mechanism(s) for management and resolution of COI.
- Final approval of the activity will be documented prior to implementation.

Resolving COI: The following actions will be initiated for resolving identified conflicts-of-interest:

- Materials associated with the CME activity will be reviewed by the Conflicts of Interests Sub-Committee or Continuing Education Committee Chair
- The CME activity will be peer-reviewed for best available evidence
- Speakers will communicate to participants/learners that they can expect balanced, bias-free, independent CME content preferably in written form.
- Speakers/Authors will be required to limit content and cannot make any recommendations on products or equipment.
- Live activities include a moderated panel discussion
- Journal articles that are biased will not be certified for CME credit
- Faculty will be divested from the activity.
- Change the focus of the CME activity

ANY PERSON REFUSING TO MAKE DISCLOSURE WILL NOT PARTICPATE IN ACCREDITED ACTIVITY

Disclosure to Learners: The nature of such relations or conflicts will be disclosed to the audience in writing in advance of the program and verbally before an individual’s presentation.
Monitoring:

- **Attendees** will be queried regarding their impressions concerning presence of commercial bias (or the absence thereof) within the activity and in specific presentations. Faculty will receive copies of evaluation summaries and comments.

- **Peer Review:** Identified Course Monitors will be present, to the fullest extent possible, at CME activities. Typically, such faculty will be the Program Director, Activity Director, CE Committee members, faculty attendees, moderators and/or a person selected by the Program Director that is not a member of the program committee or faculty. Those monitors will be queried regarding impressions of commercial bias or COI.

Elimination/Appeal: Authors and Speakers who are perceived as repeatedly manifesting commercial bias will be eliminated from consideration in subsequent accredited CME activities. Those wishing to appeal such exclusion may do so to the Continuing Education Committee.

Commercial Support: Financial support from commercial entities is accepted judiciously and only in the form of educational grants, sponsorships or exhibit fees. All of the ACCME Standards for commercial support are enforced. Designation of support for any specific aspect of the CME activities is prohibited.

Approved by the Continuing Education Committee October 19, 2005
Approved by SNM Executive Committee 20, 2005