

### **American Board of Ophthalmology: Conflict of Interest Disclosure Policy**

Everyone serving the American Board of Ophthalmology (ABO), either as employed staff, board member, committee or task force member, ABO appointee to other organizations, or volunteer, has a fiduciary responsibility to the ABO's mission. A real or perceived conflict of interest may arise when another interest, relationship, or activity competes, or is perceived to compete, with the ABO's mission. This may result in an individual influencing the ABO in ways that could lead to, or appear to lead to, personal or institutional gain or advantage for another party. Conflicts of interest for those serving the ABO may be of several types, including educational, organizational, and financial.

- **Educational:** A conflict of interest occurs when a person engages in educational activities that interfere, or appear to interfere, with the fairness and accuracy of the certification process. During their term of service, for three years before and for three years after that term, all ABO Directors, volunteers, and staff attest that they have not and will not participate as faculty or planner in educational activities specifically designed and/or publicized to prepare a candidate or candidates for a certification or continuing certification examination offered by the ABO. Examples include but are not limited to involvement in OKAP preparatory courses, mock oral exams, study guide creation, webinar, podcast, social media post or other publication marketed as "for board review."

These guidelines do not extend to an individual's normal activities as an educator, lecturer, or author where there is no explicit or implied indication that the material or activity is designed to aid a candidate in passing an examination offered by the ABO.

- **Organizational:** A duality of interest occurs when a person has a fiduciary duty to another organization or entity that may conflict with the ABO mission. Examples include but are not limited to service to professional societies, licensing boards, or regulatory agencies whose activities or investigations may overlap or compete with those of the ABO.
- **Financial:** A conflict of interest occurs when a person (or a spouse, domestic partner, parent, sibling, dependent, or other close associate) has a financial interest in an issue under discussion, that is, an issue related to the certification process. Examples include but are not limited to grants, contracts, royalties, licenses, intellectual property, consulting fees, payment or honoraria for lectures, presentations, speakers' bureaus, board service, expert testimony, travel or meeting attendance, patents, stock or stock options, warrants, receipt of equipment, materials, drugs, or other services. Financial relationships may be disclosed in the publicly available CMS Open Payments database ([Home](#) | [OpenPayments](#)). Physicians should consult their Open Payments data to ensure their disclosures are accurate.

Each year, ABO staff, board members, and volunteers are asked to disclose all interests, relationships, or activities within the previous 24 months that are related, or may be perceived to be related, to service to the ABO. This includes applicable relationships held by spouses, domestic partners, or other close family members. Disclosure does not necessarily indicate bias or preclude participation but rather represents a mechanism to mitigate a conflict when appropriate. These processes reinforce the ABO's commitment to transparency in its mission of improving quality and excellence in ophthalmic practice. If in doubt about a particular relationship, interest, or activity, please err on the side of disclosure.