

# Conflicts of Interest in Evidence-Based Guidelines: Issues and Solutions

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## The Basic Question

- How do we get the Right Information, to the Right People at the Right Time ?

# Issues

Guidelines are expensive	Funding is scarce
Experts provide credibility	Experts often have conflicts or biases
Without compensation, only those who need and want publications (academics) can volunteer for this large commitment	Most academics have conflicts and biases
If industry support is accepted	It could lead to bias or perception of bias

# Solutions: Conflicts of Interest Firewalls

The ACCP policy on conflict of interest established firewalls:

- All fund development activities are done thru the Executive Office without participation or knowledge of HSP Leadership or staff.
- Financial support must be unrestricted & the funds are invested into a rigorous methodological process & operational costs for guideline development
- ACCP strives for at least 3 sponsors if any industry sponsorship and often has 3-5
  - § Nearly 1/3 of guidelines in past 7 years had no external support

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# Solutions: Conflicts of Interest Firewalls

## Firewalls (con't):

- Sponsors are not revealed to:
  - § HSP Committee members
  - § Panel chairs and panelists
  - § Project managers
- Sponsors do not nominate or even know
  - § Panelists
  - § Subtopics
  - § Research questions
  - § Evidence review centers or methodologists
  - § Reviewers

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# Solutions: Conflicts of Interest Firewalls

## Firewalls (con't):

- Pharmaceuticals mentioned in the guidelines are referred to by their generic names only
- Sponsors do not know when or where meetings or conference calls are held and never attend any meetings or calls
- Sponsors never see any drafts and only see the final published version after publication embargo is lifted
- If industry support, then fully disclosed to readers and attendees at educational programs

# ACCP/HSP Conflict of Interest Process

## 1. Initial Disclosures and Vetting:

During the guideline panel member nomination phase



## 2. Subsequent Disclosures and Vetting:

Prior to all face-to-face meetings



## 3. Reviewers' Disclosures and Vetting:

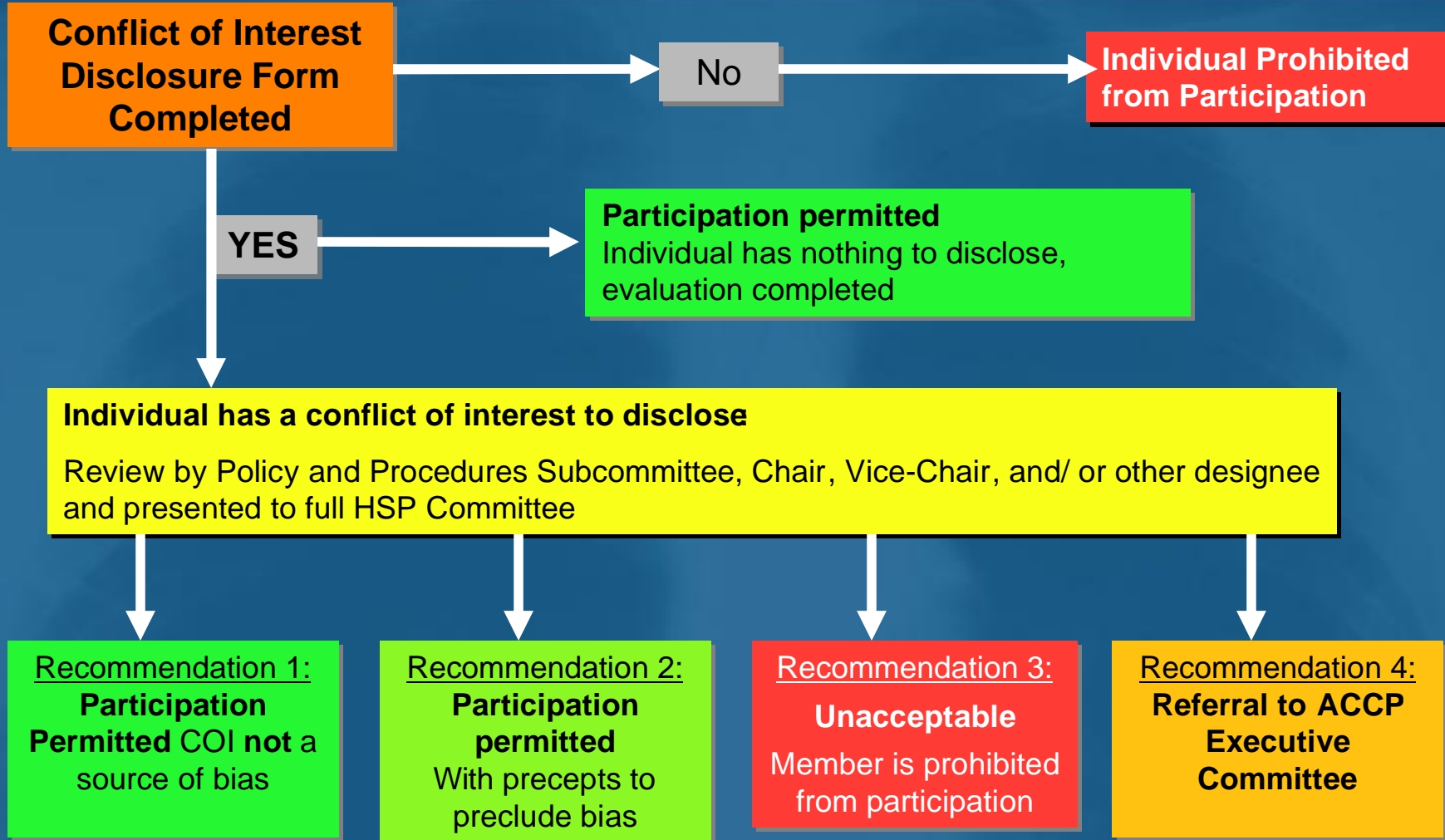
Disclosures of all individuals appointed as reviewers



## 4. Final Disclosures:

Updated at time of submission for publication

# ACCP Conflict of Interest Evaluation Process



# Solutions: Conflicts of Interest Policy

- No honoraria for guideline panelists
- Disclosures are publicly listed for all panelists in conference packets at each in-person meeting
  - Conflicted panelists must recuse themselves from both the discussions and voting on topics in which they have conflicts
- Extensive reviews of manuscripts including reviewing for biases or perception of biases

# The Future

Where do we go from here:

- Constantly reassessing all policies and procedures on an annual basis
- Formalizing a checklist for reviewing disclosures
- Review of funding by the new Development Oversight Committee
- Review the roles of methodologists, *ie*, as the Panel Chair, Chapter Editor, and Lead Author
- Need to consider biases that might be built into the evidence base (*eg*, clinical trials) and what can be done to identify such biases and eliminate them from the evidence base?

ACCP endeavors to face the challenges and manage them with ever-evolving solutions