

*Approved by the ATS Board of Directors on March 10, 2007.  
Amended December 14, 2007, September 27, 2010, and May 22, 2013.  
References to non-tobacco nicotine delivery systems updated February, 2018.*

**AMERICAN THORACIC SOCIETY  
POLICY GOVERNING RELATIONSHIPS BETWEEN  
THE TOBACCO INDUSTRY, ATS MEMBERS, AND NON-MEMBERS  
WHO PARTICIPATE IN ATS ACTIVITIES**

**1. Underlying Principles**

- A. The American Thoracic Society (ATS) is committed to the prevention and treatment of diseases caused by the use of tobacco. Therefore:
1. The ATS and its members, staff and activities will not support activities of the tobacco industry that promote the public's exposure to tobacco products, because the inhalation and oral use of tobacco products and byproducts has been proven to cause and/or aggravate a wide spectrum of diseases and conditions.
  2. The ATS:
    - a) Does not invest in tobacco entities (as defined in section II, A.);
    - b) Does not accept for its journals any research that has been funded by tobacco entities;
    - c) Does not accept for its journals any research submitted by an author that has currently, or had within the 12 months prior to submission, a relationship with a tobacco entity;
    - d) Does not accept for its conferences any research that has been funded by tobacco entities;
    - e) Does not accept as a planner or oral presenter for its conferences, or as a Society leader (as defined in section III, A.), anyone who has a current relationship with a tobacco entity, or has had one within the preceding 12 months;
    - f) Calls upon its members and non-members who participate in ATS activities not to accept relationships with tobacco entities, and to disclose present or past relationships with tobacco entities.
- B. The ATS will inform its members, its staff, any non-members participating in ATS activities, its partnering societies, and the public at large of this position.
- C. The ATS will work with partnering societies and organizations that do not have a comparable policy to resolve any differences as they affect co-sponsorship of specific projects and activities. If any differences regarding the involvement of individuals on these projects or activities who have relationships with the tobacco industry cannot be resolved to the satisfaction of the ATS, the ATS will not co-sponsor the specific project or activity.
- D. The ATS's knowledge and management of an individual's conflict of interest due to a relationship with the tobacco industry relies on the self-disclosure of ATS member and

other participants in ATS activities. This disclosure is achieved through ATS procedures for disclosure of conflict of interest and the efforts of the Society's Officers; Board members; Editors; Chairs of ATS Assemblies, committees, task forces, and scientific and educational programs; and ATS staff to carry out this policy according to established ATS procedures.

## **II. Definitions of Relationships with the Tobacco Industry**

- A. An ATS member, or a non-member who participates in the ATS activities outlined in this policy, (referred to below as "individual") has a conflict of interest whenever he/she has a relationship (financial or non-financial, as described in section IIB) with a tobacco entity or its affiliates and subsidiaries that benefits either the ATS member/non-member or the tobacco entity in its promotion of tobacco products that have been shown to cause and/or aggravate disease. For the purposes of this policy, tobacco entities are defined as including the following:
1. Any company engaged in the manufacture of a tobacco product that has been shown to cause and/or aggravate disease;
  2. Any affiliate or subsidiary of such a company for which it may be reasonably concluded, as a result of publicly available information, that the affiliate or subsidiary's ownership, activities, and/or image benefits the sale of a tobacco product that has been shown to cause and/or aggravate disease;
  3. Any foundation for medical research or medical education that is primarily funded by one or more tobacco entities (with exception of foundations established for research and prevention of tobacco-caused disease as a result of court-supervised settlements with tobacco entities, and in which tobacco entities have no other involvement);
  4. Any advocacy group that receives tobacco industry support to either (a) promote the use of a tobacco product that has been shown to cause an aggravate disease, or (b) impede policies to prevent tobacco-caused disease.
- B. Activities that for purposes of this policy define a relationship with a tobacco entity include, but are not limited to, the following:
1. Employment by a tobacco entity;
  2. Service as a consultant or spokesperson for a tobacco entity;
  3. Service on a Board of Directors, advisory board, or advisory committee of a tobacco entity;
  4. Lecture fees and other honoraria paid to the individual by a tobacco entity;
  5. Expert testimony on behalf of a tobacco entity;
  6. Receipt or pending receipt of a tobacco entity-sponsored grant including contracted research;
  7. Receipt or pending receipt of patents from a tobacco entity;
  8. Receipt or pending receipt of royalties from a tobacco entity.
  9. Ownership of stocks, options, or other equities of a tobacco entity (excluding mutual funds unless a tobacco sector fund).

### **III. Requirements for Disclosure**

- A. Wherever ATS requires declaration of potential conflicts of interest, individuals must disclose to ATS all relationships with a tobacco entity held by them at any time during their professional career, or by their spouse/life partner.
- B. An exception may be the disclosure process used for submission of manuscripts to ATS Journals, which follows procedures of the International Committee for Medical Journal Editors. The ATS does not accept for its journals any research that has been funded by tobacco entities, or submitted by an author or co-author that has or had within the 12 months prior to submission a relationship with a tobacco entity.

### **IV. Implications**

- A. Individuals known by ATS to have a current relationship with a tobacco entity, as defined in sections IIA and IIB, or to have had such a relationship within the past twelve months, will not:
  - 1. Be nominated or serve as an ATS *Officer, ATS Board Member, or Chair or Chair-elect of an ATS Assembly, Committee or Task Force.* (The ATS Nominating Committee may also regard a relationship with a tobacco entity that existed more than twelve months ago as cause for not nominating an individual to serve as an ATS Officer.)
  - 2. Serve as an ATS *Editor.*
  - 3. Serve as an ATS *Deputy Editor, Associate Editor, Guest Editor, or member of an ATS editorial board.*
  - 4. Be accepted for *publication in ATS journals.* The ATS does not accept for its journals any research that has been funded by tobacco entities or submitted by an author or co-author that has or had within the 12 months prior to submission a relationship with a tobacco entity.
  - 5. Serve as an ATS *reviewer,* including but not limited to, ATS grant proposals, documents, journals, websites, and abstracts.
  - 6. Serve as the *Chair, Co-Chair, or other panelist for an official ATS document* such as a guideline or statement.
  - 7. Serve on any *official ATS committee;*
  - 8. Serve on an *Assembly planning, program, or nominating committee.*
  - 9. Serve as a *planner, chair or moderator, or presenter for ATS scientific and educational programs.* (The ATS International Conference and other ATS programs for which abstracts are accepted do not accept research that has been funded by a tobacco entity, but may choose to accept for poster presentation the work of an author or co-author that had a relationship with a tobacco entity that existed more than twelve months ago, as long as that relationship is fully disclosed as part of the conference or program's disclosure requirements.)
  - 10. Serve as an *official spokesperson* for the ATS or *official representative* of the ATS.
  - 11. Be a recipient of *ATS recognition awards.*
- B. An individual owning tobacco stocks, options, or other equities (excluding mutual funds unless a tobacco sector fund) may be considered for approval to participate in the activities noted above if he/she permanently divests himself/herself of all such holdings a

minimum of 30 days before the date of consideration. Past ownership does not disqualify an individual for participation in the activities listed above, but may be judged as disqualifying for a specific role or requiring recusal from specific aspects of a role, if seen as likely to compromise the activity or the individual's effectiveness in it.

- C. ATS Officers, Editors, nominating committees, and others responsible for the nomination or appointment of individuals to ATS roles, or the acceptance of individuals to present at ATS conferences or develop an official ATS document, should also consider an individual's past tobacco relationships, as disclosed or otherwise known to ATS, and determine whether the past involvement is likely to compromise the activity or the individual's effectiveness in the activity, and therefore should disqualify the individual for participation or require recusal from specific roles or aspects.
- D. An individual's spouse/ life partner's relationship with a tobacco entity will not by itself cause the limitations on the individual's participation in ATS listed above. It may, however, be judged to be of such significance that it warrants disqualifying the individual for a specific activity, such as nomination for Officer, or recusal from specific aspects of an activity.

#### **V. Other Nicotine Delivery Systems**

- A. ATS disclosure procedures also now require disclosure of professional or other financial relationships with manufacturers and marketers of non-tobacco nicotine delivery systems such as e-cigarettes, personal vaporizers, vape pens, e-cigars, e-hookah, or vaping devices (products that produce an aerosolized mixture containing flavored liquids and nicotine that is inhaled by the user).
- B. Disclosure of professional or other financial relationships with manufacturers and marketers of on-prescription nicotine patches, gums, etc., indicated for tobacco use cessation is already expected within an individual's disclosure of relevant commercial interests, such as involvement with pharmaceutical companies.
- C. Involvement with commercial entities that manufacture or market non-tobacco nicotine delivery systems and are unrelated to tobacco companies is not prohibited by this policy, and does not cause the automatic limitations on an individual's participation in ATS activities specified in this policy. It may, however, be judged as likely to compromise the activity or the individual's effectiveness in it, and therefore disqualify the individual for a specific activity, or require recusal from specific aspects of an activity.

#### **VI. Procedures for Implementation of this Policy**

Procedures for implementation, interpretation, and adjudication of this policy shall be determined by the ATS Ethics and Conflict of Interest Committee or its staff, or in the case of the ATS Journals, by the ATS Publications Policy Committee, Journal Editors, and Journal staff, and are subject to review by the ATS Ethics and Conflict of Interest Committee and ATS Executive Committee.