

Advertising and Funded Activities: Policies and Principles

The AAFP accepts paid advertising and funded educational activities in certain of its publications including *American Family Physician (AFP)* and *FPM* journal print and digital channels. The revenue associated with these investments helps to support numerous activities of the AAFP, including the publishing expenses of *AFP* and *FPM*. The purpose of the AAFP journals is to serve our members, our specialty, and the broader primary care medical profession. This includes providing continuing medical education.

Because of this, the appearance of advertising and other funded activities cannot indicate or imply AAFP or journal endorsement of the advertised company or product(s), nor can funders influence the independence of journal editorial content at any stage of its development in any channel.

AAFP physician members, other non-member physicians, and other allied healthcare professionals expect the AAFP journals to be authoritative, evidence-based, and independent voices in the world of science and medicine.

Public, including AAFP member, confidence in our objectivity is critical to carrying out our mission. The AAFP adheres to the standards for advertising set forth by the Council of Medical Specialty Societies (CMSS) Code for Interactions with Companies, which includes these statements:

Advertising in all Society publications should be easily distinguishable from editorial content.

Advertising should not be designed to look like scientific articles.

In Society Journals, the placement of Advertising adjacent to articles or editorial content discussing the Company or product that is the subject of the ad should be prohibited.

Society Journals and other Society publications that...provide activities through which readers can earn CME credits should also comply with ACCME requirements for Advertising set out in the Standards for Commercial Support.

The following advertising policies and principles apply to all AAFP journal brands and channels:

1. Products and services to be advertised must meet the standards of generally accepted medical practice, be relevant to the clinical or socioeconomic practice of medicine or be of special interest to the physician readership. Funding, including for advertising, is accepted only if judged to be consistent with the interests and practice of family physicians, and funding standards are formalized, as in this document, and ever evolving.
2. The AAFP and members of its journal staff have the right to refuse any advertisement or funded activity that they deem incompatible with the mission or inconsistent with the values of the journal or the society, as well as to stop accepting any advertisement or funded activity previously accepted.
3. Advertisements, including advertising creative assets, that are new to the AAFP journals require pre-approval before they can appear and must be submitted for review no later than 10 days before the ad materials closing date for the print issue or no later than 10 days before the ad materials deadline for online and digital channels.
4. Advertisements and funded activities for the following categories are prohibited: Alcohol, tobacco, cannabis or cannabinoids, weapons, firearms, ammunition, fireworks, gambling and lottery, pornography or related themes, political and religious themes, and ads directed at children, as well as any products that make health claims that are not substantiated by scientific evidence.
5. All advertisements and funded activities must clearly and prominently identify the advertiser or funder by logo and/or name identification.
6. We prohibit the intentional placement of advertisements and funded activities adjacent to content that discusses the same company or product as the advertised product.
7. Advertisements and funded activities that make comparative claims to competitive products must be substantiated by supporting data.
8. Products that require approval by the U.S. Food and Drug Administration and/or U.S. Department of Agriculture for marketing must receive FDA or USDA approval before being eligible to advertise and must include "full disclosure" when required. It is the responsibility of the advertiser to conform to regulations of the FDA/USDA and all legal requirements for the content of claims made for products.
9. We may require supporting documentation to substantiate claims. For products not regulated by the FDA or USDA, technical and/or scientific documentation may be required.
10. Advertisements and funded activities that make health claims for non-FDA/USDA-approved nutritional supplements, foods, food additives, and other substances and devices with health claims must be substantiated by clinical studies, generally meaning studies that have independent support in authoritative, evidence-based medical literature. Such advertisements and funded activities may be required to additionally carry the following disclaimer: "These statements have not been evaluated by the [FDA or USDA]. This product is not intended to diagnose, treat, cure, or prevent any disease."
11. The AAFP follows the American Medical Association's Code of Medical Ethics Opinion 8.063 regarding the sale of health-related products from physician's offices. Products must serve the immediate and pressing needs of their patients, be supported by evidence in peer-reviewed literature and other unbiased scientific sources that review evidence in a sound, systematic, and reliable fashion, and such sales must not present a financial conflict of interest for the physician or physician's practice.
12. The AAFP follows the American Medical Association's Code of Medical Ethics Opinion 8.03 prohibiting physicians from placing their own financial interests above the welfare of their patients. Advertisements for products or services that assist the physician in running a more efficient practice, thus enabling the physician more time for patient care, will usually be accepted. This includes categories such as office equipment and software. Advertisements that focus marketing messages solely on increasing profitability are not acceptable.

13. Continuing medical education courses, seminars, and conferences are eligible to advertise, and we emphasize the preference for CME activities to be accredited by AAFP Credit System.
14. For enduring materials (e.g., books, audio and video products, software, etc.), submission of a sample for review to establish eligibility may be required.
15. The full rules for any market research or promotion associated with an advertisement must be displayed in the ad or available via a prominent link.
16. Sponsored Content: Advertorials and other longer-form content created for commercial purposes may be harder for the average reader to readily distinguish from journal content. While the AAFP journals do allow such types of advertising, we will publish no advertising that resembles our editorial content in design or format enough to confuse the reader or to be mistaken for editorial content. The company name or brand logo must appear prominently on the first page of this type of sponsored content and the word "SPONSORED" must appear in all caps at the top center of each page. Sponsored Content designs and layouts must be advance-reviewed for approval by the journal staff. At their discretion, the advertising may need to be reformatted to minimize its resemblance to editorial content, and this must be considered as part of an approval timetable. The journal editors have no part in the development of such sponsored and funded content.
17. The journals adhere to the policies of the American Academy of Family Physicians (AAFP), the Council of Medical Specialty Societies (CMSS) Code, and the Accreditation Council for Continuing Medical Education (ACCME) Standards. Journal staff members also frequently reference guidance and recommendations of the World Association of Medical Editors (WAME) and the International Committee of Medical Journal Editors (ICMJE).

18. The following online advertising formats are prohibited: pop-ups and floating ads; ads that collect and transact personally identifiable information, including physician-level data, from site users, including our members, without their knowledge or permission; ads that extend across or down the page without the visitor having clicked or rolled over the ad; and ads that send visitors to another site without the visitor having clicked the ad.
19. Online and digital advertisements and other funded or sponsored content must be clearly distinguishable from journal editorial content and will be labeled "ADVERTISEMENT" or "SPONSORED," depending on the advertising tactic, as part of standard site architecture.
20. Neither advertisers nor their agents may collect any personal information from the user except with the user's knowledge and permission and only after giving the user substantive information about the uses of the information. (See paragraph 18 above.) Similarly, cookies, pixels, applets, and other such files are prohibited if those files transmit any personally identifiable information to the advertiser or agent without the user's knowledge and permission.

Business policies

21. In consideration of publication of an advertisement, the advertiser and the agency, jointly and severally, agree to indemnify and hold harmless the AAFP and its officers, agents, and employees against expenses (including legal fees) and losses resulting from the publication of the contents of the ad, including, without limitation, claims or suits for libel, violation of privacy, copyright infringement, or plagiarism.
22. The AAFP shall not be liable for any failure to print, publish, or circulate any ad that is accepted. However, the journals shall, in collaboration with the advertiser or its agent, use reasonable efforts to place such advertising among subsequent available inventory.

23. The AAFP is not responsible for incidental or consequential damage for errors in printing an ad.
24. The AAFP will not be bound by any condition, printed or otherwise, appearing within agreements, on advertising order forms or within copy instructions when such conditions conflict with the conditions set forth in these advertising policies and principles.
25. Because journal editorial content requirements change as issue production progresses, all advertising insertion order position clauses are treated as important requests that may require change.
26. In the event of nonpayment, the advertiser and/or its agency shall be jointly and severally liable for such monies as are due and payable to the AAFP or its advertising sales agents.
27. Advertising materials must conform to mechanical specifications as indicated in the most recent journal media kit. These advertising policies and principles are not exhaustive and are subject to change at any time without notice.

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