

Advertising Policies and Principles

Advertising revenue in American Family Physician and FPM helps to fund the healthcare mission of the American Academy of Family Physicians.

The purpose of the AAFP's journals is to serve the medical profession and provide continuing medical education. Because of this, the appearance of advertising cannot indicate or imply AAFP or journal endorsement of the advertised company or product(s), nor are advertisers allowed to influence editorial content.

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

Public confidence in our objectivity is critical to carrying out our mission. The AAFP adheres to the code set forth by the Council of Medical Specialty Societies (CMSS) Code for Interactions with Companies, Standards for Advertising (Section 9.1) which states:

"Advertising in all Society publications should be easily distinguishable from editorial content (e.g., through labels and color-coding). 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. Advertising in Society Journals should be subject to review by the Editor-in-Chief and overseen by the Society. Society Journals and other Society publications that publish Advertising for CME activities or 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.
2. Products and services not explicitly covered by these policies will generally be accepted if they are determined to be in harmony with the stated purpose of the journal. However, the journal editor in chief or journal division director has the right to refuse any advertisement that, in their sole discretion, is incompatible with the mission or inconsistent with the values of the journal or society, and to stop accepting any advertisement previously accepted.
3. Advertisements, including advertising creative, 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 closing date for the issue.
4. Advertising for the following categories is prohibited: Alcohol, tobacco, cannabis or cannabinoids, weapons, firearms, ammunition, fireworks, gambling and lottery, pornography or related themes, political and religious advertisements, advertisements that claim to have a non-scientifically substantiated cure or method, advertisements that make unsubstantiated health claims for the products advertised, and advertisements directed at children.
5. All ads must clearly and prominently identify the advertiser by logo, trademark, or signature.
6. Per CMSS code, we prohibit the intentional placement of advertising adjacent to articles discussing the company or products in the same class as the advertised product.
7. Ads 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 for marketing must receive FDA approval before being eligible and must include "full disclosure" when required. It is the responsibility of the advertiser to conform to regulations of the FDA and all legal requirements for the content of claims made for products.
9. Advertisers may be required to submit supporting documentation to substantiate claims. For products not regulated by the FDA or other government agency, technical and/or scientific documentation may be required.
10. Ads that make health claims for non-FDA approved nutritional supplements, foods, food additives, and other substances and devices with health claims must be substantiated by clinical studies acceptable to the journal's editor in chief—generally meaning studies that have independent support in authoritative, evidence-based medical literature—and are subject to a literature review prior to acceptance. Such ads must additionally carry the following disclaimer: "These statements have not been evaluated by the Food and Drug Administration. 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. Ads for products or services that assist the physician in running a more efficient practice, thus enabling the physician more time for patient care, will generally be accepted. Included here would be categories such as office equipment, medical billing systems, or other software products. Ads that focus solely on increasing profitability are not acceptable.
13. Continuing medical education courses, seminars, and conferences are eligible to advertise.
14. For enduring materials (e.g., books, audio- and videotapes, computer 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. Advertorials: Longer form content created for commercial purposes may be harder for the average reader to readily distinguish as promotional. We define the word "advertorial" to mean an advertisement or other paid content that resembles editorial content in style, intent, and format. While the AAFP journals do allow such types of advertising, we will publish no advertising that, in the judgment of the editor in chief and journal division director, resembles our editorial content in form or format enough to confuse the reader or be mistaken for editorial content.

The company or brand logo must appear prominently on the first page of the advertorial (or, in the case of an opening spread, somewhere on the spread) and the word "ADVERTISEMENT" must appear in 14 pt. bold type (minimum), all caps, at the top center of each page. Advertorial layouts are

subject to review by the editor in chief and journal division director.

The editor in chief and journal division director must preapprove any piece that might be considered advertorial. 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. All other guidelines pertaining to advertising in the journals also apply to advertorials.

17. The journals further adhere to the advertising policies of the American Academy of Family Physicians (AAFP), the Council of Medical Specialty Societies (CMSS), the Accreditation Council for Continuing Medical Education (ACCME), 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. Advertisements that collect personally identifiable information from visitors without their knowledge or permission. Ads that extend across or down the page without the visitor having clicked or rolled-over the ad. Ads that send visitors to another site without the visitor having clicked the ad.
19. Online advertisements, including sponsored content, must be clearly distinguishable from editorial content. Online ads will be labeled "advertisement" 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 to which the information will be put. 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 its reasonable efforts to place such ad 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 on order blanks or copy instructions when such conditions conflict with the conditions set forth in these advertising policies and principles.
25. Because 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.
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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