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EPA GUIDANCE ON CONFLICTS OF INTEREST

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Conflict of interest (COI) is a set of circumstances that creates a risk that professional judgments or actions regarding a primary interest will be unduly influenced and compromised by a secondary interest. It might arise in clinical practice, research, and education, and might include individuals and institutions.

Primary interests include the pursuit of well-being of patients, ensuring the independence of medical education, and protecting the objectivity and integrity of medical research.

Secondary interests might involve financial interests, pursuit of recognition and professional career advancement. COI might result from the multiple roles of physicians in patient care, research, administration, provision of expert opinion and policy advice, and consultancy to commercial organizations. The purpose of the COI policy is to protect the interests of the patients, strengthen the integrity of the profession, and preserve public trust in medicine and psychiatry. The aim of the guidance is to eventually prevent these conflicts from arising rather than remediate them ex post. It is desirable to identify factors that might lead to their occurrence, offer a framework for their recognition and assessment, introduce the principles and standards of their disclosure, and provide recommendations for their transparent resolution.