

## **The American Society of Breast Surgeons' Code of Ethics**

The American Society of Breast Surgeons' (ASBrS) Code of Ethics (the "Code") serves as a code of conduct for employees and volunteers of ASBrS in their capacity as members of the board, committees, working groups, and/or society representatives.

The principles and requirements that comprise the Code are based upon, and are designed to ensure full compliance by ASBrS volunteers and employees with, the fiduciary duties imposed upon such individuals by state corporate law, the federal tax code's prohibition on private inurement and private benefit and other requirements of federal tax exemption, common law due process requirements, federal and state antitrust and unfair competition law, state tort law, and other legal precepts and prohibitions.

ASBrS employees and volunteers affirm their endorsement of the Code and acknowledge their commitment to uphold its principles and obligations by accepting and retaining positions within the ASBrS.

### **Principles of the Code**

#### **ETHICS COMPLAINTS**

- Any society member or staff member may bring suspected violations to this code to the timely attention of the ethics committee chair or co/vice chair. The committee will determine if in fact this is a complaint of an ethical nature. If so, it will be reported to the executive committee.
- The executive committee will then conduct a proper and confidential investigation into the suspected violation. This responsibility may be delegated to the ethics committee at the discretion of the executive committee or when there is a conflict of interest at the level of the executive committee.
- If the ethics committee is tasked with investigating a complaint, the ethics committee will present their findings to the executive committee. The final authority/responsibility for determining appropriate remedial or disciplinary action for an ethics violation resides with the executive committee.
- Appropriate remedial or disciplinary action will be pursued against an individual who makes a bad faith report or who retaliates against a person raising ethics concerns or participates in an investigation.

#### **RESPONSIBILITY**

##### Description of Responsibility

- Responsibility is our duty to take ownership for the decisions we make or fail to make, the actions we take or fail to take, and the consequences that result.

##### Standards of Responsibility

- We stay informed and uphold the policies, rules, regulations and laws that govern our work, professional, and volunteer activities.
- We report unethical or illegal conduct to appropriate management and, if necessary, to those affected by the conduct.

## **RESPECT**

### Description of Respect

- Respect is our duty to show a high regard for ourselves, others, and the resources entrusted to us. Resources entrusted to us may include people, money, information, and reputation.

An environment of respect engenders trust, confidence, and performance excellence by fostering mutual cooperation where diverse perspectives and views are encouraged and valued.

### Standards of Respect

- We communicate openly and professionally.
- We negotiate in good faith.
- We do not exercise the power of our position to influence the decisions or actions of other ASBrS volunteers, members, employees or volunteers in order to benefit personally or to their detriment.
- We do not act in an abusive manner toward others.
- We respect the rights of others.

## **FAIRNESS**

### Description of Fairness

- Fairness is our duty to make decisions and act impartially and objectively. Our conduct must be free from competing self-interests, prejudices, and favoritism.

### Standards of Fairness

- Conflict of Interest Situations
  - We proactively and fully disclose any real or potential conflicts of interest to the appropriate stakeholders. (See ASBrS Conflict of Interest policy, CMSS Code for Interactions with Companies)
  - When we realize that we have a real or potential conflict of interest, we refrain from engaging in the decision-making process or otherwise attempting to influence outcomes, unless or until: (i) we have made full disclosure to the affected stakeholders; (ii) we have an approved mitigation plan; and (iii) we have obtained the consent of the stakeholders to proceed.

- Favoritism and Discrimination
  - We do not hire or fire, reward or punish, or award or deny contracts based on personal considerations, including but not limited to, favoritism, nepotism, or bribery.
  - We do not discriminate against others based on, but not limited to, gender, pregnancy, race, color, age, religion, disability, nationality, sexual orientation, gender identity or any other protected classifications under federal, state or local law.
  - We apply the rules of the organization without favoritism or prejudice.

## **HONESTY**

### Description of Honesty

- Honesty is our duty to understand the truth and act in a sincere manner both in our communications and in our conduct.

### Standards of Honesty

- We do not engage in or condone behavior that is designed to deceive others, including but not limited to, making misleading or false statements, providing information out of context or withholding information that, if known, would render our statements as misleading or incomplete.
- We do not engage in dishonest behavior with the intention of personal gain or to the detriment of another.

**ACKNOWLEDGEMENT:**

I have read and understand the Code of Ethics and agree to abide by them for the duration of my employment and/or service to the American Society of Breast Surgeons. This signature page should be returned to:

Laura Randel  
The American Society of Breast Surgeons  
10330 Old Columbia Road, Suite 100  
Columbia, MD 21046

Email: [lrandel@breastsurgeons.org](mailto:lrandel@breastsurgeons.org) Fax: 410-381-9512

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Signature

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Print Name

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Date

## **Appendix**

### **RELATED POLICIES**

- ASBrS Bylaws
- ASBrS Conflict of Interest Policy
- [ASBrS Study Submission Policy](#)
  - Policy developed by the ASBrS Research Committee. Relates to any research proposal submitted to the Society. If submitting a research proposal that involves mining the Mastery of Breast Surgery database, members must have a Waiver of Authorization (permission to proceed with a retrospective study using de-identified patient data) from an IRB, typically that of the investigator's home institution. Obtaining IRB authorization is the responsibility of the investigator.
- [CMSS Code for Interactions with Companies](#)
  - Developed by the Council of Medical Specialty Societies. The Society signed on to the code in 2012.
- [The Accreditation Requirements and Descriptions of the Accreditation Council for Continuing Medical Education \(ACCME\)](#)
  - Developed by ACCME. Includes the criterion that the Society must follow to maintain accreditation and the commercial support standards we follow for educational programs.

### **Other Sites for Reference**

- [AMA Frequently Asked Questions in Ethics](#)
- [SAGES Statement on the Relationship Between Professional Medical Associations and Industry](#)