Disclosure FAQs
Where do I submit/update my disclosure?
You may update your disclosure by logging into your NASS My Account at: spine.org/disclosure

What is the deadline for disclosure?
The default disclosure deadline is May 1. However, it is expected you update as soon as there are any changes to your relationships and/or when staff requests you update based on activities in which you are involved.

Who should disclose?
In general, NASS’ disclosure policy applies to NASS Participants.

A NASS Participant is an individual involved in any NASS-related activity, such as: those who serve in committee and leadership positions within the society, authors on NASS publications, including but not limited to The Spine Journal (TSJ), SpineLine, Contemporary Concepts and Clinical Guidelines, and speakers, instructors, moderators or panelists for any NASS-related events.

In some situations, limited disclosure requirements also apply to audience members at NASS-related CME events. NASS members or meeting attendees who are not further involved in any NASS-related activities beyond mere membership or attendance are encouraged, but not required, to make the disclosures called for in the NASS Disclosure Policy.

If I am a member, but do not participate in NASS activities, do I have to disclose?
No. Members who do not participate in any activities listed above are not required to disclose as a condition of membership.

However, if you attend a NASS CME event and you wish to ask a question/make a comment during a Q&A period (during a symposium, for instance), you will be asked to verbally disclose relationships that any reasonable observer would deem relevant.

May I refuse to disclose my information to NASS and still participate?
No. As with ACCME policies which do not allow presenters to refuse to disclose, the NASS disclosure policy is mandatory. Disclosure according to the NASS policy is a requirement of participation in both NASS CME activities and as a NASS volunteer. Those who do not wish to disclose according to the NASS policy may not submit abstracts for NASS meetings or volunteer to serve on committees/task forces.

Will I still have to disclose verbally?
Yes. ACCME policies require verbal disclosure by the moderator or presenter. This verbal disclosure may reference the slide and indicate that more detailed information is available in the program.

What should be disclosed?
All Participants in any NASS-related activities must disclose any of the following relationships that existed at any
point in time twelve (12 months) prior to the date of disclosure: There are four categories a participants’ disclosure will fall into:

1) Financial Relationships
2) Non-financial Relationships
3) Financial or Non-Financial Relationships of Someone with Whom the Participant has a Close Personal Relationship
4) Past Material Relationships

The disclosure format retains the intent of the policy: to disclose any and all participant relationships and to allow attendees and other learners to judge whether or not a relationship constitutes a conflict of interest or source of bias with respect to information that is presented in an educational setting in accordance with Accreditation Council for Continuing Medical Education (ACCME) regulations. For further guidance and explanation regarding this policy and ramifications of policy violations, please refer to the full accompanying document, the NASS COI – Disclosure & Management Policy.

What about context? All this financial information is useless without knowing more about the nature of the relationship.

The NASS online disclosure module provides the ability to define the context of each relationship, with categories such as "consulting," "grants," and "royalties," as well as with text boxes which allow for clarification in the individual's own words. To view the online disclosure module and complete your own disclosure, visit spine.org/disclosure. In some cases, however, lengthy disclosures may be edited by staff for length, making every effort to retain the spirit of the disclosure (presenters are always given the chance to review their disclosure in final form prior to publication)

How do I provide a dollar value for stocks/options?

The information requested in the disclosure module (accessed at spine.org/disclosure) for stocks does not include a dollar value. NASS is aware that values fluctuate, or that there may be no value to options, etc. Information requested includes "number of shares" and "percentage of company" ONLY.

What are the ranges?

Level A. $100 to $1000
Level B. $1,001 to $10,000
Level C. $10,001 to $25,000
Level D. $25,001 to $50,000
Level E. $50,001 to $100,000
Level F. $100,001 to $500,000
Level G. $500,001 to $1M
Level H. $1,000,001 to $2.5M
Level I. Greater than $2.5M

How do I complete/update my disclosure using the online module?

If you have never disclosed with NASS before, the user-friendly module will walk you through the process. Just visit NASS MyAccount. You will need your member ID and password. If you don't have this information, you can
retrieve it via the disclosure module log-in page or by contacting the Membership Department. Your disclosure needs to be updated ONCE per year (barring any changes in your relationships, or additional activities participated in with different deadlines).

If you have disclosed with NASS before and need to update, your disclosure will be available to see in both itemized and sentence form. You have options to edit, remove, or add relationships as needed. When you are done, select “Submit Disclosure.”

Once your disclosure is submitted, you will receive an email informing you of such and it will be available in the NASS Public Index within 2-4 business days.

**What happens with my information?**

Your disclosure will be accessible by the general public, NASS staff members, along with the audience of any NASS presentation. You may not “opt out” of having your disclosure publicly available. It will also be made readily available to the previously mentioned parties via the Final Program, Proceedings supplements, and on disclosure slides. In the case of questions regarding a volunteer or presenter’s disclosure, the information may also be reviewed by members of the Professional Conduct & Ethics Committee, the COI Review Panel, and/or the NASS Executive Committee.

**What if I am submitting an article for The Spine Journal (TSJ)?**

In accordance with the North American Spine Society’s (NASS) COI – Disclosure & Management Policy and manuscript submission guidelines recommended by the International Committee of Medical Journal Editors (ICMJE), you will be asked to provide a comprehensive and universal disclosure form during the online submission process. EACH author must provide a universal disclosure, including dollar amounts in ranges for each financial relationship, using the ICMJE form (link provided at The Spine Journal submission site: https://ees.elsevier.com/spinee/default.asp). The corresponding author is responsible for sending a blank form (or link to the form) to each author, and then collecting all completed forms to upload to the list of submission files. For additional information, please contact The Spine Journal Managing Editor, Taylor Bowen, tbowen@spine.org.

**How will my information be listed in Annual Meeting program materials?**

Information included in the Final Program and Proceedings will be similar to that provided in prior years, in the format Name: Company - Relationship, followed by a letter representing the appropriate dollar range. Both publications will contain a key indicating the values that correspond to these ranges.

A sample listing would be: Last Name, First Name: Company-Royalties, Level B; Company-Consulting, Level A

**What is the COIRP?**

The COI Review Panel (COIRP) reviews disclosures for possible conflicts related to the involved party’s ability to maintain unbiased, ethical interactions while participating on their respective NASS activity. The protocol document for the COIRP can be viewed here.
How do I submit a question to the COIRP?

To solicit the advice of the COIRP, please send an e-mail to Jessica Yang, Manager of Ethics & Compliance. Your e-mail should include your question in its entirety, including, if applicable, the exact nature of the relationship in question and the NASS activity for which you are disclosing.

If I am aware that a NASS volunteer or a presenter at a NASS meeting has inadequately or inaccurately disclosed their relationships, and I want to issue a complaint, what do I do?

When submitting a complaint, you should send your letter to the address below. In your letter, be sure to mention specifically what part of the disclosure policy you feel the member/participant/author in question has violated, and include what evidence you have that contradicts their submitted disclosure.

Jessica Yang - Manager of Ethics & Compliance  
North American Spine Society  
7075 Veterans Blvd  
Burr Ridge, IL 60527  
(630) 230-3600

Who do I contact if I have a question not covered in this FAQ, or if I need help with the disclosure module?

If you have any further questions, please feel free to contact the staff liaison in charge of the disclosure program: Jessica Yang, Manager of Ethics & Compliance via e-mail or (630) 230-3684.