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# *NASS Expert Opinion and Witness Guidelines*

## NASS Expert Opinion and Witness Guidelines

NASS members are frequently asked to provide expert medical testimony and opinions related to spinal care in a variety of areas such as legal, administrative, or other quasi-governmental proceedings. It is in the best interests of all concerned that these opinions be truthful, objective, evidence-based and scientifically sound. To that end, NASS has adopted the following guidelines by which members must abide when offering any expert opinions regarding spinal care. Failure to follow these guidelines might subject the member to disciplinary action before the Professional Conduct & Ethics Committee (PCEC).

1. **The NASS member must be qualified to provide the expert opinions.** At the time of providing his/her opinions, a NASS member shall:
  - a. have a current, valid and unrestricted license in one or more U.S. States or Territories (or an international equivalent) to practice in the field in which his/her expert opinions are offered;
  - b. hold a current certification, if available, by a board recognized by the American Board of Medical Specialties (or the international equivalent); and
  - c. be actively engaged in clinical practice in the medical specialty or area about which the member is offering his/her opinions. Alternatively, a NASS member who is not in active clinical practice, should be prepared to otherwise demonstrate his/her competence. Examples of such competence might include, but are not limited to: participation in clinical research, active teaching or supervision of medical trainees, or publication in relevant peer-reviewed medical or scientific journals.
2. **The NASS member must properly prepare prior to offering any expert opinions.** Prior to offering any expert opinion regarding spinal care any NASS member serving as an expert shall:
  - a. reasonably seek and review all medical records and information relevant to his/her opinions; and
  - b. thoroughly review and understand the current concepts and practices related to the opinions offered, as well as the concepts and practices that were in place at the relevant time, place and context, if different.

3. **The NASS member must testify impartially and objectively.** Any NASS member, while providing expert opinions regarding spinal care shall:
  - a. testify truthfully and accurately;
  - b. accurately represent his/her credentials, qualifications, experience and background along with the relevant evidence, concepts and practices of the field;
  - c. offer opinions that are supported by reliable evidence, whether that is through personal clinical experience, scientific clinical references and/or other evidence. The expert shall also be prepared to explain the basis for his/her opinions;
  - d. take all reasonable measures to ensure that his/her expert work is relevant, reliable, honest, unbiased and based on sound scientific evidence.
4. **The NASS member's compensation shall be reasonable and not contingent on the outcome of the case.** A NASS member may be compensated for his/her work providing expert medical opinions; however, if the member is compensated, he/she must ensure that:
  - a. compensation is reasonable and commensurate with the time and effort given to review of the particular matter and preparation for said testimony; and
  - b. compensation is not in any way contingent upon the outcome of the matter.