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**Association of  
American Medical Colleges**  
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February 6, 2019

Ms. Seema Verma  
Administrator  
Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services  
**Attention: CMS-3367-NC**  
7500 Security Boulevard  
Baltimore, MD 21244

***RE: Accrediting Organizations Conflict of Interest and Consulting Services; Request for Information (CMS-3367-NC)***

Dear Administrator Verma:

The Association of American Medical Colleges (AAMC) welcomes the opportunity to respond to the Request for Information (RFI), “Accrediting Organizations Conflict of Interest and Consulting Services,” 83 *Fed. Reg.* 65331 (December 20, 2018) issued by the Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services (CMS).

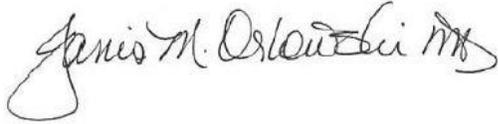
The AAMC is a not-for-profit association dedicated to transforming health care through innovative medical education, cutting-edge patient care, and groundbreaking medical research. Its members are all 152 accredited U.S. and 17 accredited Canadian medical schools; nearly 400 major teaching hospitals and health systems, including 51 Department of Veterans Affairs medical centers; and more than 80 academic societies. Through these institutions and organizations, the AAMC serves the leaders of America’s medical schools and teaching hospitals and their more than 173,000 full-time faculty members, 89,000 medical students, 129,000 resident physicians, and more than 60,000 graduate students and postdoctoral researchers in the biomedical sciences. Together, these institutions and individuals are the American academic medicine community.

The CMS RFI asks for comment on potential conflicts of interest (COI) related to accrediting organizations (AOs) that provide fee-based consultative services to the facilities they accredit. It is not possible to avoid all conflicts of interest; when they cannot be avoided, COIs must be managed. The AAMC has not heard concerns from members about potential conflicts of interest on the part of any accrediting organizations. It is our understanding that TJC has policies and processes in place that manage the COIs. CMS should ensure that all accrediting organizations have appropriate policies and procedures in place that adequately manage either real or potential conflicts of interest. The policies and procedures should be transparent to the public. In addition, the organization should have a mechanism to address concerns raised by the public. Organizations they accredit and the public should be made aware of those policies and should be able to obtain them easily, perhaps by having them prominently posted on the AO’s website.

Administrator Verma  
February 6, 2019  
Page 2

If you have any questions, please contact Ivy Baer, [ibaer@aamc.org](mailto:ibaer@aamc.org) or 202-828-0499.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Janis M. Orlowski M.D." with a stylized flourish at the end.

Janis M. Orlowski, M.D., M.A.C.P.  
Chief Health Care Officer

cc: Ivy Baer, AAMC

Attachment

**Conflict of Interest Statement  
for LCME Members and Secretariat Staff  
(Effective March 2018)**

**STATEMENT**

In order to avoid actual conflicts of interest, or even the appearance of such conflicts, the following policies and procedures have been adopted and will be enforced by the Liaison Committee on Medical Education (LCME).

No LCME or Secretariat staff member will participate in a review of materials submitted by or about a medical school, in discussions or voting at LCME meetings, or in a reconsideration of accreditation status if the program is:

1. One in which the LCME or Secretariat staff member or an immediate family member has been connected as a student, graduate, faculty member, administrative officer, staff member, employee, or contracted agent within the past five (5) years.
2. One in which the LCME or Secretariat staff member or an immediate family member has interviewed for employment within the past two years or has immediate plans to apply for employment.
3. Located in the same state or metropolitan area as the medical education program or institution of the LCME or Secretariat staff member, or in such close geographic proximity that the programs or institutions involved can reasonably be considered as competing with each other for financial advantage (for example, in the operation of hospitals or clinics operated by the programs).
4. Part of a university system where the LCME or Secretariat staff member is employed.
5. Engaged in substantial cooperative or contractual arrangements with the LCME or Secretariat staff member or institution of the LCME or Secretariat staff member or an immediate family member.
6. One which has engaged the LCME or Secretariat staff member or an immediate family member to act as a consultant to, or on behalf of, the school within the past eight (8) years. Provision of short-term educational services (such as guest lectures) is not considered consulting that poses a conflict of interest.
7. One in which the LCME or Secretariat staff member or an immediate family member has any financial, political, professional, or other interest that may conflict with the interests of the LCME.
8. One in which the LCME or Secretariat staff member believes that there may be a conflict due to other circumstances, such as participation in accreditation or consultation review

of the program for other agencies, close personal relationships with individuals at the program, etc.

9. One in which the program has reason to believe, and can document to the satisfaction of the Secretariat, that the participation of the representative could be unfairly prejudicial.

No LCME Member will speak for the LCME on matters related to accreditation unless authorized by the Secretariat. Members must not give the impression that they are speaking for the LCME without such authorization.

Definitions:

- *Immediate Family Member*: A spouse, life partner, child, parent, or sibling.
- *Consultation*: The provision of advice focusing on or substantially related to matters subject to review for purposes of LCME accreditation. This term is not meant to exclude (a) the provision of such advice to school where the Member holds an active academic appointment or full time employment status, or (b) the provision of short term educational activities involving the well-accepted academic practices of dissemination of knowledge and best practices to general audiences, guest lecturer, or academic presentations.
- *LCME Discretion*: Whenever in these guidelines a term is not expressly defined, the definition of such term and the determination of its potential for creating a conflict of interest shall be at the sole discretion of the LCME Secretariat or, upon the Secretariat's determination, at the sole discretion of the LCME.

**I have read and understand the above statement, and I agree to be bound by its terms.**

