

Charter

Financial Interest and Disclosure Reporting Proposal

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Goal

The relationships between health professions educators, researchers, and industry are complex. Collaboration with industry is often essential for bringing new treatments and devices to the healthcare marketplace in a scalable fashion. In some cases, financial ties and other commitments or relationships can unduly influence the content of education, published research, or care delivery. To address this concern, journals, continuing education providers, schools, societies, teaching hospitals and government agencies often require that authors and faculty disclose their financial interests and other relevant commitments or relationships. Many then work to manage any conflicts. Active researchers and faculty members find themselves spending large amounts of time completing duplicative disclosure statements for the various organizations with which they work, taking time away from their research and education activities. In some cases organizations define terms differently, making reporting more complicated.

Institutions could streamline the reporting of financial interests and other disclosure requirements by using a centralized system for collecting data on financial interest and other required disclosures. This would eliminate duplicative work on disclosure forms. A technology standard for financial interest and disclosure reporting is essential to enable sharing of this data and relieve clinicians and researchers of the administrative burden of sending duplicative data to the organizations that require this data. Such a system could also improve the accuracy and clarity of information reported by ensuring the consistency of data definitions used among organizations.

Context

In 2009 the Institute of Medicine (IOM) Committee on Conflict of Interest in Medical Research, Education, and Practice published a report calling for a more effective, centralized system for reporting financial interests.^{1, 2} The Association of American Medical Colleges is now working to develop a harmonized central system that will provide a single mechanism for individuals to input, update, and disclose information to requesting organizations. The developed platform will integrate with existing institutional systems and all field elements will be accommodated and information provided to entities based on their own individual requirements.

MedBiquitous develops information technology standards for the health professions that advance lifelong learning, continuous improvement, and better patient outcomes. Through Working Groups and a Standards Committee, MedBiquitous members are creating a technology blueprint for advancing the health professions. Based on XML and Web services standards, this blueprint will weave together the many activities, organizations, and resources that support the ongoing education and improvement of healthcare professionals.

Standards Environment

At present the author of this proposal does not know of any direct conflicts with existing standards development efforts. The proposed specification will be unique in its scope and content.

Scope

We propose developing requirements and XML data specifications for financial interest and disclosure data. Analyses performed by the IOM Committee on Conflict of Interest in Medical Research, Education, and Practice will inform this work, including the report Conflict of Interest in Medical Research, Education, and Practice.

If possible, the group will leverage useful specifications developed by other organizations. The MedBiquitous Technical Steering Committee will offer guidance and technical support when needed.

References

1. Lo B, Field MJ, eds. Conflict of Interest in Medical Research, Education, and Practice. Washington, DC: National Academies Press; 2009.
2. Lichter AS, McKinney, R. Toward a Harmonized and Centralized Conflict of Interest Disclosure: Progress From an IOM Initiative. *JAMA*. 2012; 308: 2093-2094.