



Financial Conflict of Interest

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1 Policy Description

It is Canadian Cancer Trials Group (CCTG) policy to ensure the scientific credibility and the general acceptance of the results of Canadian Cancer Trials Group (CCTG) studies which clearly depends on the integrity and objectivity of the investigators and other Group members involved in these trials. Even the perception that an individual has a bias may cast doubt on the validity of results. This policy was established to address such concerns and will define areas of financial conflict of interest and identify when disclosure should be provided.

2 Introduction and Scope

The Public Health Service (PHS) regulation entitled “Responsibility of Applicants for Promoting Objectivity in Research for which PHS Funding is Sought and Responsible Prospective Contractors” (42 CFR Part 50, 45 CFR 94, final rule published 8/25/2011) currently requires that grantee institutions have written policy guidelines on financial conflict of interest. The intent of this regulation is to promote “objectivity in research by establishing standards to ensure there is no reasonable expectation that the design, conduct, or reporting of research funded under PHS grants or cooperative agreements will be biased by any conflicting financial interest of an investigator.” Further, as the Canadian Collaborating Clinical Trials Network within the Cancer Therapy Evaluation Program National Clinical Trials Network, the CCTG is subject to the National Cancer Institute (NCI)/Division of Cancer Treatment and Diagnosis (DCTD) Conflict of Interest Policy for NCI/DCTD-supported Cooperative Group or National Clinical Trials Network Randomized Phase 2 and Phase 3 Clinical Trials (August 2012). This policy makes CCTG responsible for compliance with both the PHS regulation and NCI/DCTD policy and for managing those conflicts that are identified.

This policy is applicable to all individuals associated with CCTG who are in a “decision-making role,” that is, those involved in the development, conduct, analysis and reporting of the results of CCTG studies, as well those involved in policy-making or priority setting. This includes, but is not limited to:

- Canadian protocol committee chairs and members for all trials except those that are:
 - Permanently closed; or,
 - Closed to accrual and primary results have been published;
- Disease Site Committee Chairs and Executive members;
- Data Safety Monitoring Committee Chair and members;
- Committee on Economic Analysis Chair and members;
- Quality of Life Committee Chair and members;
- Correlative Sciences and Tumour Biology Chair and Executive members;
- Clinical Trials Committee Chair and members;
- Strategic Executive Advisory Council Chair and members;
- All Central Operations and Statistics Office staff; and,
- Immediate family members of the individuals noted above.

3 Definitions

3.1 Terms

Research: Any Group protocol, investigation or analysis of a drug, technique, treatment or technology, and any correlative biologic investigations related to such protocols, investigations or analyses, and includes publication or other public disclosure of the results.

Institution: Any domestic or foreign, public or private, entity or organization (excluding a Federal agency) that is applying for, or that receives, PHS (including NIH) research funding. For the purpose

of this policy, “CCTG” or “the Group” is the “Institution” as referenced in the policies noted above.

Investigator: Includes all scientists, clinicians, statisticians, nurses, Clinical Research Associates, lay representatives and others whose participation in Group research includes having an active role in the development and conduct of the protocol, as well as the reporting of study results. (See Section 2 for a listing of those included in this policy.)

CCTG / Group responsibilities: An Investigator’s professional responsibilities on behalf of the CCTG in their role as defined in Section 2, which may include, for example, activities such as research, research consultation, teaching, professional practice, Group committee memberships, and service on panels such as Institutional Review Boards / Research Ethics Boards or Data and Safety Monitoring Boards.

Financial conflict of interest: A conflict of interest may exist whenever an Investigator or a member of his or her immediate family has a direct or indirect interest or relationship, financial or otherwise, with an Outside Entity that may conflict, be perceived as conflicting or be inconsistent with the Investigator’s duties, responsibilities, or exercise of judgment in any Group research;

Financial interest: Anything of monetary value, whether or not the value is readily ascertainable.

Outside entity: Any publicly or non-publicly traded biotechnology, pharmaceutical, bioinformatics, or other similar company from which an Investigator (and spouse and dependent children) receives remuneration or in which any person has an ownership or equity interest.

Sponsor: The sponsor is the entity providing funding, drug, materials, etc., in support of or for use during the Research in which the Investigator is involved. For the purposes of this document, sponsor does not necessarily have regulatory oversight.

Conflict of Interest Committee (COIC): A committee appointed by the Group Director, composed of members of CCTG who represent the investigator membership of the Group, executive leadership, committee leadership, and statistical leadership. The COIC’s mandate, including membership, is detailed in its Terms of Reference.

Immediate family member: Investigator’s spouse and dependent child(ren).

3.2 Acronyms

SOP	Standard Operating Procedure
WKI	Work Instruction
CCTG	Canadian Cancer Trials Group
PHS	Public Health Service
NIH	National Institutes of Health (US)
NCI	National Cancer Institute (US)
CTEP	Cancer Therapy Evaluation Program (US)
DCTD	Division of Cancer Treatment and Diagnosis
NCTN	National Clinical Trials Network (US)

COIC	Conflict of Interest Committee
FCOI	Financial Conflict of Interest
CIRB	Central Institutional Review Board (US)

4 Procedure

4.1 The Policy

4.1.1 Required Disclosure

In accordance with the “Conflict of Interest Policy for Cooperative Group Phase 3 Clinical Trials” (August 2012) and the “Responsibility of Applicants for Promoting Objectivity in Research for which PHS Funding is Sought” (42 CFR Part 50, Subpart F) revised 2011, the CCTG requires the disclosure of *significant financial interests* related to the Investigator, his/her spouse and dependent child(ren) as follows:

- A financial interest consisting of one or more of the following interests (i.e. de minimus threshold) of the Investigator (and those of the Investigator’s spouse and dependent child(ren)) that reasonably appears to be related to the Investigator’s institutional responsibilities:
 - With regard to any publicly-traded entity, a *significant financial interest* exists if the value of any remuneration (i.e. salary and any payment for services not otherwise identified as salary [e.g. consulting fees, honoraria, paid authorship] received from the entity in the twelve months preceding the disclosure and the value of any equity interest (i.e. stock, stock option, or other ownership interest in the entity) as of the date of disclosure, when aggregated, exceeds \$5,000.
 - With regard to any non-publicly traded entity, a *significant financial interest* exists if the value of any remuneration received from the entity in the twelve months preceding the disclosure, when aggregated, **exceeds \$5,000**, or when the Investigator (or the Investigator’s spouse or dependent child(ren)) holds any equity interest (e.g. stock, stock option, or other ownership interest); or
 - Intellectual property rights and interests (e.g. patents, copyrights), upon receipt of income related to such rights and interests.
- Investigators also must disclose the occurrence of any reimbursed or sponsored travel (i.e. that which is paid on behalf of the Investigator and not reimbursed to the Investigator so that the exact monetary value may not be readily available), related to their Group responsibilities; provided, however, that this disclosure requirement does not apply to travel that is reimbursed or sponsored by a federal, state, or local government agency, an Institution of higher education as defined at 20 U.S.C. 1001(a), an academic teaching hospital, a medical center, or a research institute that is affiliated with an Institution of higher education. The details of this disclosure will include, at a minimum, the purpose of the trip, the identity of the sponsor/organizer, the destination, and the duration, and may include a determination or disclosure of monetary value, in order to determine whether the travel constitutes an FCOI with the PHS-funded research.
- The term *significant financial interest* does not include the following types of financial interests:

- salary, royalties, or other remuneration paid by the Group to the Investigator if the Investigator is currently employed or otherwise appointed by the Group, including intellectual property rights assigned to the Group and agreements to share in royalties related to such rights;
- income from investment vehicles, such as mutual funds and retirement accounts, as long as the Investigator does not directly control the investment decisions made in these vehicles;
- income from seminars, lectures, or teaching engagements sponsored by a federal, state, or local government agency, an Institution of higher education as defined at 20 U.S.C. 1001(a), an academic teaching hospital, a medical center, or a research institute that is affiliated with an Institution of higher education; or,
- income from service on advisory committees or review panels for a federal, state, or local government agency, an Institution of higher education as defined at 20 U.S.C. 1001(a), an academic teaching hospital, a medical center, or a research institute that is affiliated with an Institution of higher education.

4.1.2 Ceiling Affecting Participation

The “Conflict of Interest Policy for Cooperative Group Phase 3 Clinical Trials” (August 2012) defines a maximum threshold above which an Investigator cannot be involved in the development and management of a clinical trial. The following are the criteria for this threshold and CCTG will ensure that the information necessary to determine whether this threshold has been exceeded will be collected.

- Payments from sponsor in excess of \$25,000 per year during the research and for one year after, not including research compensation;
- Any financial arrangement in which value of compensation could be influenced by outcome of the study;
- Equity interest in a publicly-traded company sponsor exceeding \$50,000 per year during the time of the research and one year after; and/or,
- Any interest in a non-publicly traded company whose value cannot be readily determined referencing public prices considered by the Financial Conflict of Interest Committee to be substantial enough to meet the de maximus threshold.

4.1.3 Timing

Disclosure of an Investigator’s potential financial conflict of interest (and those of the Investigator’s spouse and dependent children) that reasonably appear to be related to the Investigator’s Group responsibilities by completion of the *CCTG Financial Conflict of Interest Form* is required as follows:

- No later than at the time of application for NIH-funded research;
- Within thirty days of discovering or acquiring (e.g. through purchase, marriage, or inheritance) a new Significant Financial Interest;

- Prior to/upon assuming a role as outlined in Section 2; and,
- At least annually while in a relevant role as outlined in Section 2 to ensure that potential conflicts which develop during the conduct and/or analysis of the trial or the research product or during the dissemination of results, are also disclosed.

4.1.4 Managing and Reporting Declared Conflicts of Interest

Disclosures whose value falls between the de minimus and de maximus thresholds will be reviewed by COIC Administrators. Disclosures that relate to PHS-funded research or have a financial conflict of interest will be brought to the COIC meeting for formal review and development of a management plan as applicable. If the COIC believes that the individual's financial conflict of interest should not disqualify her/him from a leadership position in the study, the Group must submit the financial conflict of interest and a management plan to the NIH through the eRA Commons website via Queen's as required and to the CIRB at the time of the application, as applicable.

For any financial conflict of interest previously reported by CCTG, the CCTG shall provide, through eRA Commons, an annual FCOI report that addresses the status of the financial conflict of interest and any changes to the management plan for the duration of the PHS-funded research project. The annual FCOI report shall specify whether the financial conflict is still being managed or explain why the financial conflict of interest no longer exists.

Examples of conditions or restrictions that might be imposed to manage a financial conflict of interest include, but are not limited to:

- Public disclosure of financial conflicts of interest (e.g. when presenting or publishing the research);
- Appointment of an independent monitor capable of taking measures to protect the design, conduct, and reporting of the research against bias resulting from the financial conflict of interest;
- Modification of the research plan;
- Change of personnel or personnel responsibilities, or disqualification of personnel from participation in all or a portion of the research;
- Reduction or elimination of the financial interest (e.g. sale of an equity interest);
- Severance of relationships that create financial conflicts; or,
- Others at the discretion of the Group.

Additionally, specifically for Phase III trials, financial conflicts of interest whose value falls between the de minimis and de maximus thresholds will require that the Management Plan be submitted with any Central Institutional Review Board (CIRB) applications which will require answers to the following two questions be provided (along with the Management Plan):

1. Does the study chair or any principal involved in the development or coordination of this study have any significant financial conflicts of interest as defined in the "Conflict of Interest Policy for NCI/DCTD-supported Cooperative Group or Network Group Randomized Phase 2 and 3 Clinical Trials?"
2. If so, does the Cooperative Group or Network Group have a management plan in place to address the conflicts disclosed in question #1?

4.1.5 Investigator Training

Investigators in a role as outlined in Section 2 must undergo financial conflict of interest training at least every four years, and immediately when any of the following circumstances apply:

- The Group revises its financial conflict of interest policies or procedures in any manner that affects the requirements of Investigators;
- An Investigator assumes a role as outlined in Section 2; or;
- The Group finds that an Investigator is not in compliance with the Group's financial conflict of interest policy or management plan.

It is recognized that individual CCTG members may receive financial conflict of interest training from other sources. However, CCTG will provide financial conflict of interest training to investigators subject to the requirements of this policy in the form of annual distribution of this policy and its associated disclosure form. Regardless of whether they have significant financial conflict of interest to disclose, CCTG investigators will be asked to sign and return the form indicating they have read and understood the information provided.

4.2 Non-Compliance and Sanctions

If/when an Investigator fails to comply with this policy, the Group shall within 120 days:

- complete a retrospective review of the Investigator's activities and the NIH-funded research project to determine any bias in the design, conduct or reporting of research;
- document the retrospective review consistent with the regulation; and,
- document the Group's determination as to whether any NIH-funded research, or portion thereof, conducted during the period of time of the Investigator's non-compliance with the Group's Financial Conflict of Interest Policy or a Financial Conflict of Interest Management Plan, was biased in the design, conduct, or reporting of such research.

If bias is found, the Group shall notify the NIH promptly and submit a mitigation report to the NIH that shall address the following:

- impact of the bias on the research project; and,
- the Group's plan of action or actions taken to eliminate or mitigate the effect of the bias.

Thereafter, the Group shall submit FCOI reports annually, in accordance with the regulation. Depending on the nature of the financial conflict of interest, the Group may determine that additional interim measures are necessary with regard to the Investigator's participation in the NIH-funded research project between the date that the financial conflict of interest is identified and the completion of the Group's independent retrospective review, in accordance with 42 CFR 50.605(a)(3) and 42 CFR 50.605(b)(3).

In addition, if the NIH determines that one of its funded clinical research projects whose purpose is to evaluate the safety or effectiveness of a drug, medical device or treatment has been designed, conducted or reported by an Investigator with a financial conflict of interest that was not managed or reported by the Group, the Group shall require the Investigator involved to disclose

the financial conflict of interest in each public presentation of the results of the research and to request an addendum to previously published presentations.

Failure to disclose a potential conflict of interest as required above under “disclosure” or participation in “prohibited activities” could result in loss of privilege to participate in the activities of the CCTG.

5 Appendix

- Financial Conflict of Interest Committee Terms of Reference.


6 References

- The Public Health Service (PHS) regulation entitled “Responsibility of Applicants for Promoting Objectivity in Research for which PHS Funding is Sought and Responsible Prospective Contractors” (42 CFR Part 50, 45 CFR 94, final rule published 8/25/2011)
- National Cancer Institute (NCI)/Division of Cancer Treatment and Diagnosis (DCTD) Conflict of Interest Policy for NCI/DCTD-supported Cooperative Group or National Clinical Trials Network Randomized Phase 2 and Phase 3 Clinical Trials (August 2012)

7 Revision History

Version Number	Version Date	Brief Description of Revision(s)
V003	2022-Mar-16	Updated to reflect COIC Administrator review; collection to include trial committee chairs and members for all trials except those that are permanently closed or closed to accrual and primary results have been published.
V002	2018-Jun-7	Updated to include the Strategic Executive Advisory Council (SEAC)
V001	2014-Nov-14	Initial Release

8 Signature

Signature of Responsible Group Leader:	Janet Dancey		March 23, 2022
	Name	Signature	Date