

TO: All AAPS Discussion Groups and Focus Groups
FROM: The AAPS Executive Council
SUBJECT: AAPS Commenting on Critically Important Issues
DATE: February 18, 2010

AAPS feels strongly that discussion, debate, and the exchange of knowledge among scientists are vital activities that enhance the organization's contributions to health. Dialogue on critical scientific issues speaks to the organization's values of communication and member involvement. As such, members are encouraged to use AAPS as a forum for discussion through the organization's programming, Web sites, and social media sites.

After careful consideration, the AAPS Executive Council (EC) has agreed to support AAPS Sections and Focus Groups' needs to respond to scientific issues that are critically important to the pharmaceutical sciences. In doing so, the EC encourages all groups to be cautious and transparent when moving forward with opinions, and requests adherence to the following guidelines. All are free to respond to items of critical importance (e.g. FDA guidance), as individuals representing only themselves. However, when a member(s) wishes to speak on behalf of an AAPS group (e.g. a Discussion Group, or Focus Group), or AAPS as a whole, the EC realizes a need to assert a level of control to ensure the protection of the organization's Vision, Mission, Values, and status as an educational non-profit entity. Therefore, member(s) wishing to speak on behalf of AAPS or AAPS groups must receive EC approval before doing so.

Since the FDA provides only a short window of time to respond to any given guidance, groups who would like to respond will need to have a mechanism in place to monitor and filter content, in addition to allotting enough time for EC review and approval. AAPS Public Outreach Director Stacey May will act as the primary liaison between groups wishing to respond and the EC.

This is not the first time that AAPS Leadership has approached the question of how and whether to comment on issues of critical importance; in fact, it has come up numerous times over the years. Throughout these prior discussions it has been the policy of AAPS that the organization does not wish to compromise its status as a 501c3 non-profit, and wishes to continue to develop its reputation for scientific objectivity and its ability to mediate impartially between groups to which its members belong. Specifically, a discussion in the summer of 2001 concluded that although AAPS did not want to enter into professional lobbying activities, it would be in the organization's interest to prepare scientific documents pertinent to issues of current interest to governmental agencies or with ramifications for science policy, and to establish a mechanism to communicate its opinions rapidly when required.

It is our hope that these guidelines and the establishment of procedures for response by Discussion Groups and Focus Groups will give members the freedom and opportunity to respond to critically important issues in science in a way that is in keeping with AAPS' long history of rigorous knowledge-exchange, as well as the organization's Vision, Mission, and Values.

AAPS thanks you for your continued support and dedication to making this the premier organization of all scientists dedicated to the discovery, development and manufacture of pharmaceutical products and therapies through advances in science and technology.