

**Standard Operating Procedure (SOP)  
For Review of ASC Position Statements and Guidelines**

***Approved by the ASC Executive Board May 18, 2014***

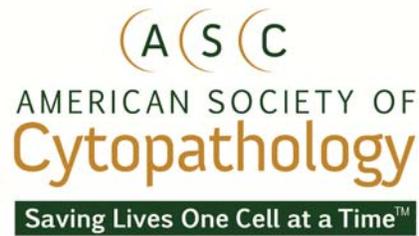
***Background***

The ASC maintains several position statements and guidelines pertaining to the practice of cytopathology. The Executive Board of the ASC has decided that periodic review of these documents is appropriate and has charged the Guidelines & Position Statement Review Committee to perform these reviews.

Both the Institute of Medicine (IOM) (1-2) and the American Cancer Society (ACS) (3-4) have published formal guidance on how their position statements and guidelines will be reviewed and updated. These processes emphasize transparency, resolution of conflict of interest, systematic evidence-based review, grading the strength of the recommendations, articulation of the recommendations, external review, and updating.

As such, the ASC has implemented this standard operation procedure for the review of existing and new position statements and guidelines for the Society.

1. While the ASC is pleased to cosponsor guidelines with other organizations, ultimately the ASC is responsible for ensuring the integrity of their own guidelines and position statements.
2. Where it is deemed appropriate or necessary, the ASC Guidelines Committee may convene a subcommittee of ASC members and advisory members to assist in evaluating and updating specific position statements.
3. Every effort will be made to ensure that conflicts of interests are addressed in the review of these documents. It is recognized that certain guidelines may raise specific conflicts, either monetary or not, that may be particularly relevant for individual members of the Society. In such situations, it is advised that members who think that they may be in that position should recuse themselves from reviewing a particular guideline. For example, in the review of the guidelines for litigation in gynecologic cytology, members who are extensively involved in this area on either side should be recused. However, members who have only limited experience with this process should not necessarily be recused. It is recognized that this requirement remains somewhat subjective, and additional study of how to strengthen this process will be undertaken by the committee.
4. Prior to the Committee's final review of a guideline or position statement, a formal announcement of an open comment period will be made to all ASC Members, providing the opportunity to submit whatever opinions they may have concerning these documents and/or potential revisions.



5. The Committee will meet, review the submitted comments, review the literature on the topic, and issue a recommendation. Recommendations will be made based on a committee vote with the majority vote forwarding the action (i.e. approve as is, retire...etc.). A short justification or explanation may be provided when deemed helpful for clarification or outlining new/updated findings in the literature. Depending on the situation, a full explanation may be published if appropriate. Any dissenting voting members of the Committee, together or singly, will have the opportunity to include a written supporting statement for their minority position.
  
6. The Committee's recommendations would be structured as such:
  - a. Approve as is
  - b. Retire with no further action
  - c. Hold and wait for extensive revisions
  - d. Modify with specific recommendations

*Examples:*

*Approve:* The guidelines are clear, relevant, up to date, and accurate

*Retire:* No longer relevant

*Hold:* Relevant, but requires extensive revision beyond the scope of this initial assessment

*Modify* as follows

  - Change text A to text B because it is more up to date
  - Remove Text C because it is not relevant
  - Add Text D because it is more accurate
  
7. The Committee's recommendation and comments would then go to the Ethics and Conduct Committee, who would have the option of either approving the submitted recommendations, to make minor revisions to the recommendations if deemed appropriate, or to return the recommendations to the Guideline Committee for further discussion if major revisions are felt necessary.
  
8. After approval by the Ethics and Conduct Committee, the recommendations would then go to the Executive Board, which is ultimately responsible for the final approval. The discussions in all committees would be kept confidential.
  
9. The approved guidelines or position statements with their date of approval by the Executive Board as will be posted on the ASC website.



### *References*

1. Institute of Medicine. Clinical Practice Guidelines We Can Trust. Washington DC: National Academic Press; 2011.
2. Institute of Medicine. Finding What Works in Health Care: Standards for Systematic Reviews. Washington DC: National Academic Press; 2011.
3. Brawley O, Byers T, Chen A, Pignone M, Ransohoff D, Schenk M, Smith R, Sox H, Thorson AG, Wender R. New American Cancer Society process for creating trustworthy cancer screening guidelines. JAMA 2011 Dec 14;306(22):2495-9.
4. Byers T. Implementation of the new American Cancer Society process for creating cancer screening guidelines. Cancer Cytopathol 2012 Oct 25;120(5):287-90.