Preamble

The following Code of Conduct and Ethics outlines principles of conduct that are deemed appropriate and acceptable by the Association of Academic Physiatrists (AAP). The statements and principles contained herein are not laws, but rather serve as guidelines for professional behavior for all AAP members.

As a part of the Code of Conduct and Ethics, the AAP endorses the American Medical Association Code of Medical Ethics. Adhering to the American Medical Association (AMA) principles should provide guidance to physiatrists in acting honorably and professionally in patient care, research, community advocacy, professional self-regulation, systems-based practice, and interprofessional relationships.

The Code of Conduct and Ethics does not replace AAP policy; individual AAP policies may overlap with principles covered in the Code of Conduct and Ethics.

Professional Expectations

As practicing clinicians, educators, researchers, and professional colleagues, AAP members should be held to high standards of conduct, be law-abiding members of society, and maintain good standing in their professional and/or medical practice. Members are expected to maintain a high degree of personal integrity, be truthful and honest, and conduct themselves morally and ethically. Members should work hard to preserve their good reputation within the community, and should avoid activities that undermine the trust and high regard society places in them. Members should serve and advocate for the underprivileged segments of our society, especially persons with a disability.

AAP members have a responsibility to maintain their own health and wellness. Members are encouraged to take advantage of available resources that help support mental and physical health. Members should make every effort to recognize the signs of substance-related impairment in themselves and their colleagues; members are expected to voluntarily withdraw from society activities while impaired. Self-referral for appropriate treatment should be advised and encouraged. Confidentiality should be maintained for Members undergoing evaluation and treatment for impairment. Members who have successfully completed rehabilitation for impairment should not be restricted from AAP participation.

AAP members are subject to all civil and criminal statutes applicable to the region in which they practice. Illegal activity by an AAP member compromises their personal integrity, and casts aspersions on the AAP as a medical society. Members who knowingly participate in illegal or fraudulent behavior should be reported to the appropriate local authorities as well as to AAP leadership.

AAP members must recognize their own professional limitations and expertise. Members should represent themselves truthfully throughout all their interactions with the AAP and other medical societies, and in regulatory, accreditation, and other professional settings. Members should be aware that scientific misconduct and improper research behavior reflects poorly on the AAP and on the profession of physiatry as a whole. Fabrication, falsification
or plagiarism in proposing, performing or reviewing research, or in reporting research results or other data reporting, will not be tolerated.

AAP strategic goals should guide members, with the needs of the academic society taking priority over any personal financial, commercial, political, or other interest while engaged in society activities. Conflicts of interests, per AAP policy, should be addressed.

**Interprofessional Expectations**

AAP members should interact with other members and non-member affiliates with respect and kindness. Communication with colleagues in discussions, meetings, and other interactions should be truthful and should avoid personal attacks and disparagement.

The AAP rejects, as unethical, discrimination based on disability, race, color, gender, gender identity, age, sexual orientation, socioeconomic status, political convictions, religion, national origin, or any other protected category. This pertains to appointments and awards, presentations, leadership assignments/promotion, manuscript evaluation, salary determination or other professional activities in which members participate. Members should maintain awareness of implicit and explicit bias, microaggressions and other inappropriate behaviors. Members should role model principles of diversity, equity, and inclusion. Training in unconscious bias and cultural sensitivity is recommended for all members and mandatory for leadership roles. Members should be especially mindful of their interactions with physiatrists of more junior status (such as with early career, resident/fellow and students) and maintain appropriate relational boundaries in order to ensure psychological safety and equitable inclusion for all members.

AAP members should be aware of, and adhere to, email and social media professionalism standards. Social media etiquette for medical professionals is expected. Members should not post inappropriate or offensive content; these include posts that reference inappropriate substance use, sexual or explicit pictures, graphics or language, posts that expose patients or patient identifiers or posts that violate privacy laws or inappropriately distribute confidential information related to the AAP. Members should not infer to represent the position of the AAP via any communication including social media posts unless they have received prior approval and serve in an official capacity to do so.

**Meeting-Specific Conduct**

Expectations for professional member conduct extends to all AAP events including scheduled and ad hoc in-person meetings and virtual interactions of any type that are connected to any AAP activity. Members are expected to follow all local and meeting-specific rules and regulations. Disruptive behavior will not be tolerated. Members are subject to all civil and criminal statutes applicable to the location of the AAP event.

AAP members should utilize rooms as assigned and respect staff directives and instructions. Members must not host interviews (e.g. for trainee or employee candidates) in any hotel room used for sleeping. These events should be hosted in hotel conference spaces, designated meeting rooms, or office/library spaces. Accommodations for disabilities should be provided for interviews and meetings. If a member needs additional information about space utilization or accommodations for personal or professional needs, they should speak with AAP staff.

AAP members that present scholarly work in any meeting setting (such as educational forums or poster halls) should adhere to ethical, moral, medical, and legal guidelines. Biomedical research projects should be approved by institutional animal research boards, or human subject boards, when appropriate. Scholarly communications must not convey false, untrue, deceptive, or misleading information. In addition, these communications should not
misrepresent any author’s credentials, training, experience, or ability. Members should seek to avoid conflicts of interest in research. When unavoidable, such conflicts should be disclosed per policy. Authorship credit should be consistent with level of participation and should adhere to available authorship guidelines.

**Disciplinary Actions**

AAP members have an ethical duty to report colleagues to both state licensing authorities and to either the AAP President or Executive Director when documentary evidence exists of illegal or inappropriate activity. The AAP Board of Trustees shall have the power to investigate, censure, suspend or expel any member who violates the AAP Code of Conduct and Ethics. The Board shall follow the procedures set forth in the AAP Disciplinary Policy before taking any disciplinary action.