The SRNT 2025 Strategic Review is a 15 month-long process that the Board of Directors has undertaken in order to identify and address factors that we believe will impact the Society over the next 7 - 10 years. The goal is to arrive at member-informed conclusions, recommendations, and ultimately, Board actions that will set the stage for SRNT’s future relevance, integrity, and sustainability.

The Guiding Principles and supporting Boundary Standards are the distillation of and key outcomes from the SRNT 2025 discussions, interviews, and the 2019 Membership Survey (hot link to the timeline document).

2025 Strategic Review: PURPOSE & ROLE

Chair: Suchitra Krishnan-Sarin

Guiding Principles & Boundary Standards

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Guiding Principle 1: What We Are
SRNT is a scientific society whose mission is to stimulate the generation and dissemination of new knowledge concerning nicotine and tobacco in all its manifestations, from cellular to societal, across research disciplines, with the ultimate goal of reducing the harms of tobacco and nicotine-containing products around the globe.

SRNT is the professional society for those working on tobacco and nicotine scientific questions in pre-clinical, clinical, public health, epidemiological, and policy/regulatory research domains.

SRNT is dedicated to the field, and to supporting and developing the careers of researchers in every discipline.

SRNT welcomes as members those working in adjacent communities (tobacco control, cessation, etc.) who are interested in the latest, cutting edge research on nicotine and tobacco.

Boundary Standards

1A: SRNT is an International Organization
Despite a large majority of members from North America, SRNT is a truly international organization as evidenced by:

- an international membership with more than 40 countries represented;
- international representation on the Board of Directors, the journal leadership team, the SRNT University leadership team, and throughout Network leadership; and
- welcoming international participation in all volunteer activities and sponsored programs.

1B: Organizational Priorities
SRNT’s primary responsibilities are to (in order of priority):

- SRNT members
- The broader scientific society (including non-member researchers)
- “Adjacent Communities” (including, but not limited to, the tobacco control, treatment, community intervention, harm reduction, and policy/regulatory/advocacy communities)
- The general public

1C: How Decisions Are Made
SRNT makes decisions about Society activities based on the fit with the mission and the sustainability of programs; what is realistic, useful and sustainable (financially and otherwise); and, provides a clear benefit to membership or organizational goals. Elected and appointed officials will set aside personal or work-related bias when considering issues of importance to the broader, diverse membership of SRNT.

Rationale
The overwhelming response from the membership via the membership survey was for SRNT to retain its unique role as a scientific society first and foremost, including a top priority to be a voice for the scientific community.
Guiding Principle 2: SRNT’s Unique Role

As a scientific society, SRNT has a unique role, a unique identity and purpose, and a unique agenda within the broader public health/tobacco control community. The role of a scientific society is not interchangeable with that of organizations operating in adjacent or “sister” communities. SRNT’s unique role is to focus on science. Please refer to the white paper, “The Edge Zone Effect,” which articulates how SRNT interacts with adjacent communities while retaining its unique identity.

Boundary Standards

2A: Acknowledging Boundaries between SRNT and Adjacent Communities

While members of SRNT work within adjacent communities and ally organizations, the scientific community—as represented by SRNT—is not interchangeable with those groups, nor does SRNT automatically share their respective identities, agendas, and goals (as articulated in Boundary Standard 2C). However, SRNT may support the work of, or partner with, adjacent communities in support of their goals and agendas.

Specifically, SRNT may work closely with, but is distinct from:

- the treatment/medical/cessation community
- the tobacco control/advocacy community
- the harm reduction community
- regional community-intervention communities
- the regulatory/public policy community

2B: Partnering with Adjacent Communities

When interacting with or responding to requests from adjacent communities, SRNT will stay true to its role as a scientific society, providing information to help inform policy, implementation, or other activities.

- Adjacent communities need to be proactive in communicating needs or requests for support to SRNT; SRNT may not know of issues/concerns if those are not communicated.
- SRNT will partner with adjacent communities on projects of mutual interest and benefit that foster creative thinking, problem solving, and solutions; setting boundaries that emphasize each group’s unique contribution.
Guiding Principle 2, continued

2C: Taking the Lead on Activities Beyond the Research Community
Practical application of the evidence on behalf of adjacent communities is beyond the scope of SRNT’s mission; SRNT may initiate but does not carry out activities without the express interest and participation of adjacent communities.

2D: What SRNT Is Not
In line with Boundary Standard 2A, SRNT is not, nor does it act in the capacity of:
- an NGO
- a funder of research
- a regulator
- an advocate for its adjacent communities
- an advocate for the general public
- a treatment organization
- a tobacco control organization
- a harm reduction organization
- a public health organization

This does not represent an exhaustive list but rather a list of examples of adjacent communities with complementary roles to that of SRNT as a scientific society. Similar to Boundary Standard 2A, SRNT may work closely with, but is distinct from, the above noted communities.

Rationale
The membership survey results and deliberations of the Work Advisory Group made clear that SRNT’s unique role is presenting rigorous science that enables people to make a judgment about how they view and use the science. “No group does what SRNT does in presenting science on nicotine and tobacco; this is a unique position that SRNT needs to keep.”
Guiding Principle 3: An Open and Scientific Forum

SRNT is a convener, bringing together researchers from multiple countries, from diverse backgrounds, across multiple disciplines, who represent a diversity of viewpoints on issues of concern to the nicotine and tobacco research community.

Boundary Standards

3A: Peer Review
SRNT does not disqualify science based on its funding source. SRNT provides the structures by which conference abstracts and journal papers are subjected to rigorous peer review prior to presentation, publication, or dissemination. SRNT does not endorse any research presented via any of its forums, nor does the peer review process validate or refute reported scientific findings.

3B: Transparency
In all appropriate venues and programs, SRNT will enforce rules on transparency of funding sources and conflicts of interest.

Rationale
The SRNT 2025 process (leadership interviews, the membership survey, and the deliberations of the Work Advisory Groups) has clearly identified SRNT’s role as a convener of scientific experts to bring the best scientific evidence. SRNT provides a platform for peer-reviewed science—not an endorsement of findings—and provides the audience the opportunity to have an exchange of ideas. Specifically noted: “SRNT is a unique society that enables a multi-disciplinary platform for scientific discussions to occur. At [its] core is [the] value of primacy of scientific rigor.”
Guiding Principle 4: Remaining Neutral on Outstanding Questions

SRNT will remain neutral on issues that are not clearly resolved by scientific evidence; SRNT does not take sides in ongoing scientific debates. Rather, SRNT supports the creation and dissemination, and facilitates debate, of rigorous science to address challenging public health questions, regardless of the direction that science leads.

Boundary Standards

4A: Convening Experts Versus Endorsing Positions

SRNT does not endorse the science presented at the conference or in the Journal, but ensures excellent science is presented through the peer review process. SRNT’s role is not to form opinions that are politically charged, but to convene experts to bring the best evidence and discuss the process in a respectful, scientifically-informed manner.

4B: SRNT Members Taking Positions

SRNT’s neutrality on contentious issues does not prevent individual members of SRNT from taking positions on issues that are important to them. However, SRNT members may not make statements on behalf of, or as representatives of, SRNT without express permission from the Board of Directors.

Rationale

The deliberations of the Work Advisory Groups based on the membership survey and leadership reports concluded that SRNT’s role is not to form opinions that are politically charged, but to provide the venues for the best evidence to be presented without being partisan or taking positions.
Guaging Principle 5: Advocacy

SRNT is the voice of the scientific community and may advocate for the science by providing evidence to educate decision makers or joining with advocacy organizations on positions that are consistent with the evidence base. SRNT does not engage in lobbying local or national legislators on specific bills/legislation, nor does it direct SRNT members to lobby legislators.

Boundary Standards

5A: Advocacy, Allies, and the Field
SRNT may support the advocacy efforts of adjacent communities, as well as anti-tobacco lobbying organizations, by representing the evidence related to specific questions. SRNT will, as necessary, advocate on behalf of the nicotine and tobacco scientific community for science funding in general, and for recognition of the important role science plays in any discussions of policy, regulation, or legislation.

5B: Taking Public Positions
On a case-by-case basis, SRNT will consider endorsing or supporting already accepted and/or non-controversial evidence-based guidelines, or declare a position on an issue based on clear, verifiable science that SRNT can disseminate on behalf of its membership. Otherwise, SRNT acts as an independent facilitator of scientific debates rather than the standard bearer of a particular issue other than research itself.

5C: Stating the Facts
Upon request, SRNT may share pertinent evidence with groups or decision-making bodies. If the science is strong and conclusively answers a specific question, SRNT may state “this is what the evidence suggests” without further opinion or position. If the science is inconclusive, SRNT may state “this is what we know and this is what we don’t know, based on the evidence” or “the evidence supports both Position A and Position B.”

Rationale
The deliberations of the Work Advisory Group based on membership survey results determined that SRNT’s role is not to make policy statements, but to report on the scientific evidence. If the science is strong enough, SRNT will say “this is what we know” without further opinion on the evidence presented.
2025 Strategic Review:  
PURPOSE & ROLE

NOTE ON RATIONALES:
All rationales underscore SRNT’s unique position as a scientific society dedicated to the research and dissemination of excellent science on nicotine and tobacco.

Results from the Membership Survey informed the Work Advisory Group discussions, both of which informed the development of the Guiding Principles and related Boundary Standards.