

Competing Interests' Assessment

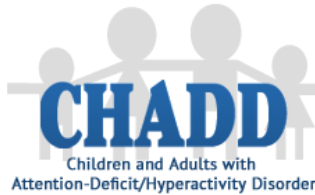
Over the past several years CHADD has increasingly been finding itself in difficult positions in determining whether a proposed activity/policy/behavior should be adopted when it is clearly desirable by some standards and yet undesirable by others. In these circumstances of 'competing interests' the organization needs clear guidelines from the national board of directors to enable staff to resolve the myriad of situations that it encounters. As it is impossible to anticipate all of the potential situations that might arise, the following general principles are adopted to provide general guidance:

- Conformance with CHADD's mission is the primary criterion to resolve conflict.
- CHADD's value to the community is greatly influenced by both the reality and the perception of its independence and integrity.
- CHADD must prove its value to the broader community in order to attract/maintain its grassroots support.
- A balance must be struck between the appearance of impropriety and the general benefit to the community (i.e. is the community better served by CHADD making a statement/taking a position when some people may consider the statement/position self-serving or by maintaining silence?).
- It is impossible to prevent some people from criticizing the balance that is struck; criticism should be expected.
- Any conflict of interest situation is best addressed by full disclosure addressing the perceived conflict.

In addition to these general principles, it seems that recent issues have fallen into what may be described as three broad categories that are addressed in more detail below.

1. Providing information versus an 'endorsement'

In the current environment general information is widely available and understood by most people. Today, it is specific information that most people are seeking; it may be about specific treatments or products or providers and the information they seek is to aid them in making a decision about their own unique situation. They are coming to CHADD in order to improve their ADHD-affected lives. Applying the first principle from above makes it clear that CHADD must say something. Silence is not an option. Therefore, CHADD must make clear that it is recounting and potentially synthesizing a collection of data/information that is available about the specific question and that it is not providing an endorsement – it must reiterate its well-crafted disclaimer language. If possible, CHADD should take the opportunity to provide its "levels of evidence" assessment. Where appropriate, it should also suggest a process/template describing considerations that the person might use in making their decision. Most simply stated, CHADD's whole purpose is to help this type of person with this type of inquiry and it should be as helpful as



Competing Interests' Assessment

it possibly can be, maintaining its objectivity, commitment to science and avoidance of endorsements.

A related issue arises when a provider wishes to provide its product to CHADD members at a discount. Similar to access to information, if a member would like to receive this product, CHADD should facilitate it again ensuring that the appropriate non-endorsement language is clearly communicated.

The process for sharing information that is deemed helpful but does not have a scientific basis includes the following:

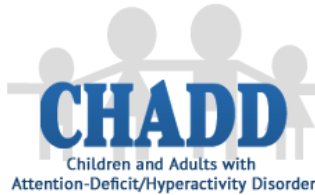
- a. Provide information to our members and the public about products that may not have a research base when it is judged to be in the best interest of our members and supports CHADD's mission.
- b. State clearly that limited or no research is available to support the effectiveness of intervention.
- c. Any claims a corporation makes about a product during a CHADD activity or promotion must be substantiated by a body of evidence. If a claim cannot be substantiated, the corporation will be asked to modify its language.
- d. Link to levels of evidence rating when available. If not available, refer to national professional advisory board for assessment of level of evidence.
- e. Include our non-endorsement statement.

The process for sharing information that may be seen as a conflict of interest (i.e. information on specific medications, products, or books) includes:

- a. Provide information to our members and the public about the product.
- b. Share any information about relationships with the individual or corporation with CHADD to promote transparency. (Author X is a CHADD volunteer, Corporation Y is a corporate partner with CHADD, etc.)
- c. Link to Levels of Evidence ratings when available and appropriate.
- d. Include our non-endorsement statement.

2. Volunteers

The typical "volunteer" problem is a cousin of the information issue in that the concern again is around avoiding even the appearance of an endorsement. This is the more traditional conflict of interest situation where some people volunteer to do things with/for CHADD who are also providers. Some of them then wish to utilize that affiliation as a way of implying that CHADD is



Competing Interests' Assessment

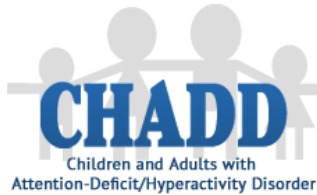
“endorsing” them. In this situation, CHADD can have volunteers complete a conflict of interest form requiring that if and when the affiliation is ever publicized the individual will also include CHADD’s disclaimer. Further, CHADD can be more pro-active by including on its website a listing of all of its volunteers (who desire to be listed) giving them publicity (the same way we do with member-providers) and thanking them for their participation but also stating that this is not an endorsement.

The process for managing volunteer

- a. All volunteers are asked to sign a conflict of interest statement written in plain English and emphasizing our no endorsement policy.
- b. Clear guidelines are given to volunteers about the language they may use in bios, on a website, and in any way describing their relationship to CHADD as a volunteer. If any endorsement may be implied, the volunteer will be asked to include the CHADD no endorsement statement.
- c. Volunteers are able to provide CHADD activities in their place of business as long as a CHADD no endorsement sign is always in clear view.
- d. Give all volunteers a CHADD Volunteer logo which may be used on websites and printed materials.
- e. A list of volunteers is included on CHADD’s website honoring their contributions and including our no endorsement statement.

3. Corporations & ‘Partnerships’

CHADD, like most nonprofit organizations, must rely on corporate as well as individual contributions. To encourage such contributions, packages of ‘benefits’ are provided to the donors. When the “contribution” is in exchange for the ‘benefits’, as is typical, the donor is, in fact, buying the benefits. If the benefits are viewed as including a role in directing the affairs of the organization, then the organization’s credibility is damaged. Currently, CHADD provides levels of “partnership” that include the donors participating with CHADD in “consultative discussions on environmental challenges and solutions” at the CHADD Education Initiative on ADHD Partners Meeting as well as other opportunities for the donor to discuss their issues/concerns with both the BOD and senior management. This type of relationship raises concerns that the other organization is buying influence with CHADD. The concern is heightened by the fact that, typically, the organizations most interested in becoming a corporate partner are those with an economic interest in the field of ADHD and do, in fact, desire to influence CHADD. While CHADD may, in actual fact, be wholly impervious to the desires and influences (that are otherwise



Competing Interests' Assessment

inconsistent with CHADD's goals and values) of such corporate partners, there will undoubtedly be some observers who will perceive the situation differently.

When organizations that have spent millions of dollars on researching the ADHD environment are willing to share the results of their research and assumptions about the future with CHADD, it is difficult to understand how it could be in CHADD's best interest to refuse. This is a rare opportunity where not only is the corporation financially contributing CHADD but they are also contributing their expertise. So, again, the challenge for CHADD is how best to enjoy this benefit while maintaining its independence and, to the extent possible, its appearance of independence. Traditionally, the best way to do this is for the corporation to:

The process for managing potential conflict of interest situations with corporations includes the following:

- a. The relationship between CHADD and the corporation and any activities must always be in support of CHADD's mission. Monetary issues may never be a major factor in a partnership.
- b. CHADD will offer the same opportunity to participate to any and all interested parties without discrimination.
- c. Any claims a corporation makes about a product during a CHADD activity or promotion must be substantiated by a body of evidence. If a claim cannot be substantiated, the corporation will be asked to modify its language.
- d. CHADD must be completely transparent to its constituents about any relationship with such a corporation or partner.
- e. Include our no endorsement statement.