

# ASCO<sup>®</sup> Guidelines

## Endorsement Methods

### Introduction

ASCO engages in the endorsement of clinical practice guidelines to recognize the high-quality work of other guideline-developing organizations, to avoid duplication of effort and to offer harmonized recommendations across guideline development groups.

ASCO considers guidelines for endorsement on topics of interest to the society and its membership. This can be done through the identification of recently released or published guidelines or organizations may submit their guidelines to ASCO for consideration of endorsement. This document lays out process and criteria used by ASCO for endorsement consideration.

### Characteristics of Guidelines Eligible for Endorsement

While discretion may be used during an assessment, the inclusion of the following characteristics reported within a guideline greatly enhances the likelihood that ASCO will be able to endorse the guideline:

#### *Guideline Development*

- The developing organization is an established developer of high quality clinical practice guidelines and/or shows commitment to a rigorous and independent process for guideline development.
- Guidelines are developed using a systematic review-based methodology.
  - Consensus recommendations are acceptable if a lack of suitable evidence was identified in the course of the systematic review.
- Evidence is quality-appraised either formally or informally.
- Guideline recommendations are actionable and clearly presented. Recommendations reflect the strength of the evidence and the strength of the recommendation is reported using common methods (e.g. GLIDES, GRADE, etc.)

#### *Conflict of Interest Disclosure and Management*

Organizations should detail their Conflict of Interest Policy or procedures. Guideline provisions of the CMSS Code include:

- Guideline panel members, contributors and reviewers must disclose potential conflicts of interest before and during guideline development.
- All relevant disclosures must be published in conjunction with the guideline.
- ASCO will consider the potential impact of the disclosures of guideline panel members and may include this information as an aspect of a decision about whether to endorse a guideline.

#### *Financial Independence*

Guidelines must meet financial independence and transparency standards. These include:

- No organization participating in the guideline will accept direct financial support from for-profit health care companies for the guideline being developed or for any updates.

- Support from non-profit foundations (other than the foundations of for-profit health care companies), government bodies, or individuals is acceptable as long as the supporter does not have the ability to influence the guideline (see next bullet).
- Guideline development must be independent from the influence of funding sources. Independence from funding sources means that the funders do not have any ability to influence topic selection, prioritization, timing of topic development, clinical questions, panel composition, review procedures, publication, or any content of the guideline.

### **Selection of Guidelines for Consideration of Endorsement by ASCO**

When a guideline is identified or submitted for consideration of endorsement, the leadership of an ASCO disease-specific Guideline Advisory Group and/or the Clinical Practice Guideline Committee (CPGC) determines if the guideline is timely and clinically relevant to the ASCO membership in the context of overall guideline development at ASCO. If the guideline is of interest and sufficient resources are available:

- A quality assessment is performed by ASCO staff (AGREE II rigor scale) and it is determined if the:
  - Guideline appears to follow high quality methodology, reporting and transparency standards.
- Content experts review the guideline and rate their agreement with the recommendations
- With favorable quality and content reviews, the decision whether to endorse is made by the CPGC leadership. If endorsement is recommended:
  - The original lead authors are contacted for consent to proceed with endorsement
    - Authors may be asked to sit on the endorsement Expert Panel
  - The original authoring organization is contacted for consent to proceed with endorsement
  - The copyright holder(s) is/are contacted for consent to proceed with endorsement
  - An ASCO Expert Panel is formed to develop the endorsement
    - ASCO's [Conflict of Interest Policy Implementation for Clinical Practice Guidelines](#) and procedures apply to the ASCO panel.

### **Guideline Endorsement Process**

- The ASCO endorsement Expert Panel meets to review the candidate guideline, discuss their agreement with the recommendations, and proceed to draft the endorsement.
- ASCO staff update the original literature search for any new evidence to be included in the endorsement
  - If new evidence is found, ASCO shares the results with the original guideline developers
- The Panel is free to make minor modifications for contextualization, clarification, or to address new evidence that was published after the release of the guideline. The essence of the recommendations remain intact as the original developer intended.
- The original guideline developers/organization may opt to review the penultimate endorsement draft.
- Guideline endorsement may result in reprinting significant portions of the original guideline.
- The endorsement is reviewed and approved by the CPGC as an ASCO endorsement product.

### **Guideline Endorsement Publications and Derivative Products**

- ASCO approved endorsements are submitted to the original authoring organization and copyright holder for review and permission to reprint any copyright material.

- Guideline endorsements are submitted for consideration of publication to the *Journal of Clinical Oncology*
  - If accepted for publication, the JCO published endorsement generally contains the following information:
    - Guideline title and the group responsible for development of the guideline
    - Purpose and rationale
    - Target population
    - Major recommendations
    - Commentary summarizing the ASCO perspective including any additions or modifications specific to the ASCO membership
    - Selected references
- A summary of the endorsement is also submitted to the *Journal of Oncology Practice* for consideration of publication. The summary consists mainly of the recommendations and any relevant discussion points.
- Derivative products such as slide sets, recommendations table, and patient materials are developed for non-commercial use and re-prints are available for endorsement materials.

### **Conclusion**

By communicating the criteria and method that ASCO uses to assess whether a guideline endorsement is feasible, the goal is to clarify and streamline the endorsement process and to engage with other guideline developers in a transparent manner. Endorsement efforts are intended to reduce duplication of effort, highlight the work of other development groups, and to present harmonized recommendations to better serve the respective memberships and the patients that they treat.

Please contact [guidelines@asco.org](mailto:guidelines@asco.org) for further information on the endorsement process.