

AMERICAN AUTOIMMUNE RELATED DISEASES ASSOCIATION

Corporate Support Guidelines

The American Autoimmune Related Diseases Association, Inc. (AARDA) promotes public policies (e.g., laws and regulations) and private initiatives (e.g., research and development) that improve the lives of people with autoimmune disease. Where appropriate, AARDA seeks the support of corporate entities for its advocacy activities to help initiate new, and expand existing, activities.

AARDA solicits donations from the business community to support its approved program objectives. Potential donors include businesses which provide products or services to autoimmune disease patients or health professionals treating them. AARDA believes it is ethically sound to solicit and accept donations from businesses dealing with autoimmune diseases. However, it is vital to guard against actual or perceived conflicts of interest in accepting such donations or in working collaboratively with health-related businesses. Specific protocols are necessary for all corporate relationships that support AARDA's activities to maintain AARDA's public image and credibility and to comply with relevant tax codes. AARDA strongly believes that protecting its image and credibility serves both its own interest and that of the corporations supporting its activities.

The following principles have, therefore, been developed to ensure that all donations solicited and accepted from corporate interests and all collaborative efforts with businesses are ethical and reflect positively on AARDA and the corporate entities involved:

1. All donations and collaborative efforts between AARDA and business entities must advance AARDA's mission as approved by the Board of Directors.
2. AARDA will accept restricted or designated funds only for activities that are consistent with the goals and objectives of AARDA's Strategic Plan unless reviewed and approved by the Board of Directors. AARDA will not enter into a relationship with a product or corporation that is inconsistent with AARDA's principles, mission, public positions, policies or standards.
3. AARDA will at all times maintain an independent position on all issues affecting the welfare of people with autoimmune diseases. The potential effects of such positions on the commercial interests of funding sources or collaboration partners shall not be a relevant factor in AARDA's decision-making process. When defining its positions, AARDA will obtain the necessary relevant information from the most objective, credible sources available to ensure that its positions are viewed as independent and to increase their likelihood of adoption and implementation.
4. While AARDA accepts financial support and other benefits from corporations, AARDA will always exercise independent judgment in all its decision-making.
5. AARDA will accept funds for projects involving educational and informational services only when it has full editorial control.
6. AARDA holds final approval of all uses of its name, logo, and other identifying symbols. These symbols can be used by commercial entities only if their use furthers AARDA's mission and only with the written consent of AARDA's Board of Directors. Any use of AARDA's name, logo and identifying marks in a corporate relationship must be reviewed and approved by AARDA in writing in advance of their use, including in statements, advertising or other materials from the corporation. Usage of AARDA's name/logo and identifying marks shall be specified in addition to the period of usage.

7. Materials from the corporation or AARDA directed to the public will contain accurate and non-deceptive terms or statements such that a reasonable individual will understand the nature and extent of the corporate relationship.
8. AARDA will accept support for professional or consumer meetings and symposia only when the program content is determined by a group of professionals or consumers representing AARDA. Funding sources will not exercise control over the program content of such meetings or symposia.
9. AARDA will not permit presentations which support a commercial product at its meetings or symposia, except under the following conditions:
 - a. Commercial exhibits at which all competitors are afforded an opportunity to exhibit their relevant products,
 - b. standards of conduct are maintained, and
 - c. scientific data is presented in an independent, organized fashion.
10. AARDA will provide appropriate recognition of business sponsorship but will be alert at all times to ensure that such recognition is not interpreted as an endorsement of a business or product.
11. AARDA will strive to have multiple companies support its activities to avoid the appearance of an alliance with any one company, its products. AARDA will not accept any funds that support a legislative agenda, or regulatory concern.
12. AARDA will not accept funding or participate in activities that could threaten its nonprofit status.
13. AARDA will ensure that business donors and collaborators are familiar with the ethical principles listed above. AARDA will strive to have a written, signed agreement between AARDA and the corporation prior to implementation of the corporate relationship if AARDA has any obligation to meet any terms or conditions.
14. AARDA will have a written agreement for any activity in which AARDA is obligated to meet any terms or conditions. (The written agreement typically applies to educational programs or other activities where the corporation might have or be perceived as having a role in content development.) The written agreement should include all of the following elements:
 - a. the amount of money that will be transferred to AARDA;
 - b. whether the payment is unrestricted or earmarked to support a particular event or program activity;
 - c. a written description of the mission-driven activity being supported that both parties will agree to use for purposes of disclosure to the general public; and
 - d. the manner in which AARDA and/or AARDA and each party will disclose the support to the general public, e.g., their Websites.
15. AARDA will evaluate on an annual basis the amount of corporate support received as a percentage of total revenue.
16. AARDA will strive to post its Annual Audit, Annual Report (listing all major corporate donors) and its IRS Form 990 on its web site in an easily accessible location within six months of its year end.