

Conflict of Interest Guidelines

Introduction

These guidelines aim to provide recommendations for audiologists and speech-language pathologists (SLPs) in Manitoba as they may encounter potential or perceived conflicts of interest in their practice. Conflict of interest occurs when a registrant's personal, financial, or professional interests could improperly influence, or appear to influence, their clinical judgment, recommendations, or actions. Conflict awareness is a continuous professional obligation, and registrants should seek clarification from the College if they are unsure whether a situation constitutes a conflict.

Examples of Perceived Conflict

1. Agreements or arrangements that prevent or could prevent the registrant from putting the client's needs and interests first.
2. Dual employment with unclear boundaries such as providing the same services to the same clients/patients in both a public and private environment.
3. Close personal relationships where the relationship may influence the registrant's professional judgment or provide earlier or easier access to services. This could include family members, close friends, or individuals with whom the registrant has a personal or business relationship.
4. Monetary or other benefits when a registrant receives, expects to receive, or could benefit from significant monetary gain related to clinical decisions or where the giver may expect preferential treatment or services beyond normal professional parameters.
5. Private practice vs. public role such as making decisions in regulatory, advisory, or oversight capacity that directly or indirectly benefit the registrant's own private practice.
6. Referral incentives such as accepting or offering payments, gifts, or other benefits in exchange for referring clients to one provider or service. The priority in such cases is client-centered care over profit or incentives.
7. Undisclosed affiliations where products or services are recommended without disclosing a financial, professional, or other beneficial affiliation with a supplier or provider.
8. Vendor relationships where incentives, gifts, or other benefits that could influence professional judgment are received from hearing aid manufacturers or assistive technology suppliers. The priority in such cases is client-centered care over profit or incentives.
9. Observed Conflict of other registrants where efforts to alert the registrant and resolve the issue have been unsuccessful should be reported to the employer or to the College.

Note for publicly or privately employed registrants: Where employer policies differ from College Standards, the requirement with the higher standard applies.