

AAMC Conflict of Interest Metrics Project Frequently Asked Questions

1. What is the purpose of the AAMC Conflict of Interest (COI) Metrics Project?

The purpose of the COI Metrics Project is to use data collected from member medical schools and teaching hospitals to help determine the effect and effectiveness of the revised regulation entitled, “Responsibility of Applicants for Promoting Objectivity in Research for which Public Health Service Funding is Sought,” which addresses individual financial conflicts of interest in PHS funded research.

The COI Metrics Project is designed to collect information readily available to participating AAMC member medical schools and teaching hospitals to measure the impact, cost, and outputs of implementing and administering the regulations. This data will provide important benchmarking information for AAMC member institutions as well as invaluable information to the National Institutes of Health (NIH) to conduct a retrospective review of the effect and effectiveness of the rule.

2. What is the role of the NIH in the COI Metrics Project?

Key individuals at the NIH were consulted in an advisory role as the research design for the COI Metrics Project was being developed. The consultation with the NIH was to ensure that the data the AAMC collected could be used in the NIH’s review of the effectiveness of the rule. The NIH has not contracted with the AAMC or requested that the data be collected. The project is not an NIH funded activity.

Participation in this data collection project does not alter institutions’ obligations to report information about individual financial conflicts of interest in accordance with the rule, and the AAMC will not submit required information to the NIH on behalf of individual institutions.

3. What data will the NIH receive from the AAMC?

The AAMC will provide the NIH with aggregate, de-identified data, collected from participating institutions, related to the year prior to the implementation of the NIH rule and the first two years after the implementation date. The data may be further broken down to demonstrate trends among institutions with common characteristics, but no institution will be identified.

4. What types of data are institutions providing to the AAMC?

All participating institutions were asked to provide the AAMC with baseline and historical data related to their conflict of interest internal programs and review processes. This included basic information about the organization of the institution, the number of disclosures the institution receives from investigators, and the number of financial conflicts of interest identified by participating institutions and reported to the NIH or other PHS funding entities.

5. How will the AAMC use the data that is collected in the project?

The AAMC is using the collected data to provide aggregate results to participating institutions and more broadly through publications and other communications. Benchmarking data will be provided to each participating institution and de-identified data will be provided to the NIH. Data provided to AAMC might be used in an AAMC publication.

6. How could the NIH use the data that is collected?

The data provided could help the NIH promote agency-level review of the individual and institutional burden of the rule as implemented and to help assess whether the rule is accomplishing the goals of the regulation. The NIH is not obligated to use any of the AAMC-provided data but has expressed enthusiasm about the COI Metrics Project and its outcomes.

7. Does any information from investigators go the AAMC?

No individual data about investigators will be collected by the AAMC. Institutions should not provide the AAMC with any information about the individuals who are making financial disclosures to the institution or for whom a financial conflict of interest was identified by the institution and reported to the NIH or other PHS funding entities.

8. Does any information about individual investigators go to the NIH?

No individually identifiable information about investigators or institutional faculty or staff will be sent to the NIH by the AAMC.

9. Does any information about specific institutions go to the NIH?

No information about specific institutions will be sent to the NIH. All data provided to the NIH will be aggregated across all participating institutions or in subgroups of similar institutions.

10. Will my institution be identified as a participant?

The AAMC may identify the names of the institutions participating in the COI Metrics Project on the AAMC website and in related publications.

11. Who at my institution will be involved in the COI Metrics Project?

One person at each participating institution was identified as the primary point of contact for the COI Metrics Project. A secondary contact was identified in case the primary contact could not be reached.

12. Who do I contact with questions about the COI Metrics Project?

You may contact us at COIMetrics@aamc.org with any questions or you may access our website at www.aamc.org/metricsproject.