

# Chicago Dermatological Society Policy Statement

## Non-discrimination and Sexual Harassment

December 2, 2020

### Purpose

The Chicago Dermatological Society (“CDS” or “the Society”) is committed to a climate that is free from forms of discrimination, including sexual harassment. The purpose of this policy is to ensure a professional and collegial environment for Society activities in which members, guests, contractors, vendors and employees are treated with mutual respect.

### Background

Behavior that is welcome or acceptable to one person may be unwelcome or offensive to another. Consequently, individuals must use discretion to ensure that their words and actions communicate respect for others. While this is important for all who participate in CDS activities, it is especially important for those in positions of authority. Harassment intended in a joking manner still constitutes unacceptable behavior. Actions resulting in fear for one’s safety and well-being may be a criminal offense in which proper authorities would be contacted. Further, we live in a diverse community, and the CDS both recognizes and embraces this fact which is implemented through the policies described below.

The Society recognizes the Constitutional rights of its members, guests, and others involved in CDS activities. However, the right of free speech does not extend to infringing upon the rights of others to feel and to be secure in their own person. Speech can cross the line through in-person interactions or online, such as on social media or electronic communication platforms. In adopting this policy, CDS makes no attempt to regulate the beliefs or views of its members or guests. Rather, our concern focuses on when behavior has the effect of infringing on the well-being or rights of those involved in or participating in CDS activities, as described in this policy.

### Policy

The Chicago Dermatological Society recognizes that this organization is best served by representation from the broadest possible diversity of member background, experience and thought. As a matter of policy, the Society is committed to non-discrimination regarding age, race, national or ethnic origin, religious belief, sex, sexual orientation, gender identity, marital status, political belief, physical or mental disability, or otherwise as may be protected by federal or state law. Further, forms of sexual harassment are not acceptable with regard to any activity of the Society. Actions or conduct -- whether in person, in writing or virtually – which are not in keeping with these principles are prohibited.

### Discussion

1. *HOSTILE OR OFFENSIVE ENVIRONMENT* – Behavior by an individual or group that contributes to a hostile, intimidating, offensive or unwelcoming environment, or which interfere with an individual’s rights as defined by law, are prohibited. This includes but is not limited to speech or behavior that a reasonable person would find unwelcome or offensive whether based on any of the protected classifications set forth above or any other legally protected status. Actions or conduct are prohibited which involve, but not limited to: epithets, slurs, or negative stereotyping; threatening, intimidating or hostile acts; demeaning jokes and display or circulation of written or graphic material that demeans or shows hostility or aversion toward an individual or group.
2. *SEXUAL HARASSMENT* – Sexual harassment is defined as any unwelcome sexual advance, requests for sexual favors or conduct of a sexual nature displayed in person or virtually. The following examples may constitute sexual harassment if unwelcome: sexual flirtations, advances or propositions; unnecessary touching; verbal comments or physical actions of a sexual nature; sexually degrading words used to describe an individual; a display of sexually suggestive objects or images including electronically sent material; and sexually explicit jokes. Clinically appropriate language or images used in a presentation concerning medical topics would constitute an exception to this definition.
3. *BULLYING* – Bullying is repeated inappropriate behavior, either direct or in indirect, involving verbal, physical, virtual or other actions conducted by one or more persons against others that is hurtful, harmful or humiliating; exhibits coercion; or abuse of power, as well as other unreasonably disruptive behavior such as sustained disruption of talks, events or meetings.

## **Reporting and Enforcement**

Allegations of a violation of these policies must be made in a timely way and in writing directed to the Executive Director or the Secretary of the Society. Reports of an alleged violation shall be taken seriously and will be investigated. All reports will be handled in confidential manner in consultation with the Society's legal counsel. Anonymous complaints will not be processed. A complainant's identity will not be made public nor will it be disclosed to parties other than the Society's Executive Committee and the subject of the allegation, except as required by law. Retaliation against an individual who submits a complaint is absolutely prohibited. Knowingly submitting a false report alleging a violation of this policy may subject the complainant to action as may be permitted by law.

Enforcement of this policy shall be the responsibility of the CDS Executive Committee pursuant to due process. The Executive Committee shall review carefully the allegations, as well as any evidence provided by the complainant. The accused individual(s) shall have the right to receive a complete copy of the complaint and all relevant information associated with the allegation, as well as the right to have a hearing before the Executive Committee, the right to be represented by legal counsel, and a reasonable time to prepare a defense and to provide evidence.

The Executive Committee may assess any of the following actions or penalties if it finds the allegation to be true:

1. Dismissal of the officer, employee or a contractor working on behalf of or representing the Society;
2. Termination of membership in the Society;
3. Restrict the individual(s) violating Society policies from attending or participating in Society functions such as meetings or social events;
4. A letter of reprimand stating the nature of the complaint and how the behavior in question may be considered a violation of CDS discrimination or harassment policies;
5. Recommend counseling for the purpose of understanding why the behavior in question is a violation of CDS policies in order to avoid similar future behavior;
6. Refer the matter to appropriate licensing, regulatory or law enforcement authorities, as appropriate.

*Adopted by the Plans & Policies Committee  
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Chicago Dermatological Society  
Administrative Office  
10 W. Phillip Rd., Suite 120  
Vernon Hills, IL 60061-1730  
P: 847-680-1666  
F: 847-680-1682  
E: Rich@ChicagoDerm.org or Info@ChicagoDerm.org