

# News Release

**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**  
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## **American Academy of Orthopaedic Surgeons Issues Statement on Partnerships Between Physicians and Implant Manufacturers**

**Rosemont, IL** – James H. Beaty, MD, president of the American Academy of Orthopaedic Surgeons (AAOS), issued the following statement in regard to the disclosure by five surgical implant manufacturers of financial relationships they have with physicians. The financial disclosures were made as part of a settlement with the U.S. Attorney for the District of New Jersey.

“AAOS supports appropriate financial disclosures to patients regarding relationships between orthopaedic surgeons and implant manufacturers. The priority of AAOS members is the care and well being of their patients. We are committed to making sure that patients and the public have confidence that partnerships between companies and physicians put the interests of patients first.

“It is important to understand that the appearance of a physician’s name on any financial disclosure filings indicates only that he or she has received compensation from the manufacturer. Many different financial relationships between members and implant manufacturers result in compensation, including providing consulting advice, conducting research, and educating orthopaedic surgeons and the public. A number of our members are also engaged in developing new medical devices to better serve patient needs. A number of these relationships result in royalties for innovative implant design.

“The scientific partnerships that some of our members have with implant manufacturers have helped develop devices that have improved the lives of millions of patients. These developments include improvements in prosthetic materials that make joint replacements last longer; design enhancements that provide better hip and knee mobility and more normal joint function; advances in prosthetic joint instrumentation that enable surgery to be done through less-invasive ways, which accelerates surgical recovery and minimizes muscle damage; and use of integrated computer-assisted surgery technology that improves reliability for total joint replacements.

"The United States is a world leader in the development of new orthopaedic technologies and techniques in large part because orthopaedic surgeons have used their unique knowledge and skills in collaboration and partnership with implant manufacturers.

"These beneficial and important partnerships between doctors and implant manufacturers must continue in order to develop new therapies, better instruments, improved implants and better patient outcomes.

"AAOS holds its members to extremely high ethical standards to ensure that even the appearance of a conflict of interest does not jeopardize the trust that patients place in our doctors. There is no place for illegal and unethical arrangements where compensation to a physician greatly exceeds the value of the services to the company. These arrangements erode public trust and confidence.

"AAOS is committed to strengthening ethical standards for our profession, and has been engaging our members with the AAOS Code of Medical Ethics and Professionalism over the past two decades. Our Standards of Professionalism on Orthopaedist-Industry Conflicts of Interest exist to ensure that all of our members understand how to identify and avoid potential conflicts of interest, and specifically address the relationship between orthopaedists and implant manufacturers.

"These Standards require AAOS members to identify and disclose potential conflicts of interest to their patients, the public and colleagues. These Standards also clearly articulate how and under what circumstances our members may work with and be compensated by implant manufacturers, as well as the penalties for failure to comply.

"We will continue to educate all of our members on how to comply with these Standards, and how to identify and resolve potential conflicts. AAOS members must adhere to these Standards as a condition of membership, and AAOS can discipline a member for violating the Standards of Professionalism, with penalties that range from censure to suspension to termination of AAOS membership.

"Our priority has been – and remains – our patients."

The AAOS Standards of Professionalism can be found at:  
<http://www.aaos.org/industryrelationships>

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*With more than 30,000 members, the American Academy of Orthopaedic Surgeons ([www.aaos.org](http://www.aaos.org)) or ([www.orthoinfo.org](http://www.orthoinfo.org)) is the premier not-for-profit organization that provides education programs for orthopaedic surgeons and allied health professionals, champions the interests of patients and advances the highest quality musculoskeletal health. Orthopaedic surgeons and the Academy are the authoritative sources of information for patients and the general public on musculoskeletal conditions, treatments and related issues. An advocate for improved patient care, the Academy is participating in the Bone and Joint Decade ([www.usbjd.org](http://www.usbjd.org)) – the global initiative in the years 2002-2011 – to raise awareness of musculoskeletal health, stimulate research and improve people's quality of life.*