

# **GUIDING POLICY ON EQUITY, DIVERSITY, AND INCLUSION**

American Academy of Neurology  
American Academy of Neurology Institute

## **1. Background**

The American Academy of Neurology and American Academy of Neurology Institute (collectively, “AAN”) is firmly committed to embracing the diversity of our members, staff and the communities they serve and affirms the need for equity and inclusiveness in our organization, our profession, and the care we provide to our patients.

Embracing and leveraging diversity in an organization has proven to be critical in achieving success in both health care delivery and fortitude of business. This must be an ongoing focus for the AAN’s pursuit of its vision to be indispensable to its members. The AAN has demonstrated commitment to diversity and inclusion for decades. Over time, our programmatic efforts have expanded vertically across the organization. While these programs were sound and well-intended, it was clear that the AAN was missing an integrative overall strategy and focus. In 2018, under the leadership of President Ralph L. Sacco, MD, FAAN, the AAN formed the Equity, Diversity, and Inclusion Coordinating Council whose overarching charge is to coordinate and advance equity, diversity, and inclusion (EDI) across the entire organization.

The AAN’s mission is to promote the highest quality patient-centered neurologic care and enhance member career satisfaction. To that end, the AAN is committed to striving for equity for all patients and all members. Equity for our patients means that each individual has a fair chance to achieve their health potential without differences in access, treatments, or outcomes for certain populations. For our members, equity means each professional can reach their fullest potential without differences in opportunity, pay, recognition, or advancement for certain populations. Especially in the setting of an increasingly diverse patient and member population, disparities in neurologic care and career inequities are in direct conflict with the AAN’s mission.

Diversity encompasses the variety of personal, social identity, experiences, skills, knowledge, and attributes that shape every one of us. The AAN recognizes that every individual has a culture. Inclusion is the act of employing systems, policies, and practices that support, engage, and demonstrate value for all individuals. Diversity of thought and the inclusion of new ideas and perspectives can help an organization to increase its creativity, generate new ideas, enhance problem solving, and increase flexibility, productivity, and effectiveness.

## **2. Value Statement**

The American Academy of Neurology affirms the value of diversity and the importance of inclusion and equity. As such, the AAN is committed to ongoing dialogue across cultural lines as a strategy for excellence in serving our members as well as addressing the needs of an increasingly diverse society. The AAN is committed to equipping current and future AAN members to appropriately meet the needs of their colleagues as well as patients, families, and caregivers. The AAN believes that by actively pursuing EDI, it positions the organization as a leader and allows us to enhance and improve the professional lives of AAN members, while promoting the highest quality neurologic care for all patients. The AAN is committed to the continuous pursuit of implementation and enhancement of EDI efforts to sustain its integrity and achieve maximum impact. The AAN will demonstrate a willingness

to challenge the status quo and encourage others with whom it does business to do the same.

### **3. Membership**

The AAN actively promotes careers in the neurosciences to historically under-represented groups to ensure a diversity of experience and breadth of perspective among the membership. We explicitly engage members and volunteers across a range of dimensions of diversity in service to the association, who offer their time and talent in a way to ensure that the association can effectively meet the needs of all patients with neurologic illness. The AAN has incorporated equity, diversity, and inclusion in its core values and diversity is expected, as appropriate, in all association programs, products, and services.

### **4. Staff**

The AAN will be intentional and deliberate about attracting talented individuals who bring a range of skills, experiences, perspectives, knowledge, and expertise to our workplace. The organization strives to assure a workplace experience for staff defined by a welcoming and inclusive environment. The staff values and employment policies will be consistent with the guiding principles of this policy.

### **5. Guiding Principles**

The American Academy of Neurology will:

- Foster mutual respect and dignity within and among all leadership, staff, and members.
- Take action to enhance equity within the AAN community.
- Represent a broad range of perspectives in our communications and content.
- Purposefully foster meaningful, open, and constructive dialogue from diverse constituencies, and persist when these conversations and collaboration are challenging.
- Highlight our similarities as a foundation for consensus.
- Acknowledge and celebrate our diversity.
- Actively follow trends and issues to allow decisive actions to minimize discrimination, bias, and inequity.

### **6. Inclusive Leadership Commitments of Board Members and Volunteers**

Members of the Boards of Directors and all other AAN volunteers will adhere to the following commitments:

- *Awareness*: Strive to understand personal bias and develop systems to mitigate its impact.
- *Importance*: Embrace the necessity of EDI for the AAN and our profession. Accept that the pursuit of EDI is not a destination, but a journey with bumps along the way. Share both successes and challenges with others.
- *Courage*: Demonstrate inclusive leadership and adhere to guiding principles of the AAN's Position Statement on EDI. Act when needed to hold others in the organization accountable.
- *Collaboration*: Support and promote collaboration among diverse individuals across the AAN.
- *Respect*: Acknowledge differences as a strength and champion inclusive language and actions in all relevant proceedings and practices.

*Policy History: Approved by the AAN and AANI Boards of Directors on September 13, 2019.*