Section 9: Communications

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9.1 Lobbying Policy

As a 501c3, SRNT does not engage in lobbying. However, SRNT may engage educating or providing expert advice to elected and appointed leaders, the general public and others about the accomplishments and/or needs of nicotine and tobacco researchers on issues pertaining to nicotine and tobacco.

Definition of Lobbying

- Lobbying is generally defined as communicating, directly or indirectly, with policymakers for the purpose of trying to influence legislation, whether federal, state, local, or foreign (non-U.S.).
- U.S. law divides lobbying into two principal categories: "direct" lobbying and "grass-roots" lobbying.
- *Direct lobbying* involves communications that
  - Are directed towards government officials;
  - Refer to specific legislation; and
  - State or strongly imply a position on it.
- *Grass-roots lobbying* involves communications that
  - Are directed to segments of the general public;
  - Refer to specific legislation;
  - State or strongly imply a position on the legislation; and
  - Encourage the recipient of the communication to contact government officials with respect to the specific legislation. (This is sometimes called a "call to action.")
- In order to be considered lobbying, an activity must generally meet all the parts of either one definition or the other. In addition, there are certain exceptions to the definitions of lobbying that may apply.
- When recording lobbying expenditures, it is critical to specify whether the spending was for direct lobbying or for grass-roots lobbying.
- The general counsel's office can provide further advice on applying the lobbying policies.

9.2 Electronic Media Policy

Web Site Policy

1. Privacy: SRNT respects the privacy of each visitor to the SRNT Web site. SRNT may use cookies. Any personal information provided by a visitor will be used solely by SRNT for internal purposes and, where appropriate, to contact individuals directly.

Personal information will be sold and will be shared only with those third-party service providers who perform functions on our behalf, including processing credit card payments, providing customer service, removing repetitive information from customer lists, analyzing data, and providing marketing assistance.

2. Copyright: The contents of all materials contained on SRNT's Web site are owned by the organization (unless otherwise indicated) and are protected by U.S. and international copyright laws. All rights are reserved by SRNT, and visitors may not copy, reproduce, download, upload, republish, disseminate, post, distribute, or transmit by any means the contents of the Web site, except with the prior express written permission of SRNT. Copyright infringement is a violation of U.S. federal law, and violators are subject to criminal and civil penalties.
3. The information contained on SRNT's Web site is provided by the organization for general informational purposes only. None of the information on the Web site is intended or should be construed to be legal advice or a legal opinion. While every effort has been made to ensure that the information contained on the Web site is as accurate as possible, omissions and errors may occur. Also, because of the nature of Web site development, maintenance, and updating, the information contained on the Web site may not reflect the most current developments. SRNT and its contributing authors expressly disclaim all liability to any person with respect to the consequences of any act or omission committed based upon reliance, in whole or in part, on any of the contents of the Web site.
4. At certain places on the Web site, live links to other Internet addresses ("third-party sites") can be accessed. Such third-party sites contain information created, published, maintained, or otherwise posted by institutions or organizations independent of SRNT. SRNT does not endorse, approve, certify, or control these third-party sites and therefore cannot guarantee the accuracy, completeness, efficacy, timeliness, or correct sequencing of information located at such addresses. The information on SRNT's Web site and third-party sites is provided "as is" and without warranties of any kind, either express or implied. To the fullest extent permissible pursuant to applicable law, SRNT disclaims all warranties, express or implied, including, but not limited to, implied warranties of merchantability and fitness for a particular purpose. Use of any information obtained from such third-party sites is voluntary, and reliance upon it should only be undertaken after an independent review of its accuracy, completeness, efficacy, and timeliness. Reference therein to any specific commercial product, process, or service by trade name, trademark, service mark, manufacturer, or otherwise does not constitute or imply endorsement, recommendation, or favoring by SRNT.
5. The Web site, its contents and any links provided in the Web site are provided on an "as is" basis, and SRNT disclaims all warranties, express or implied, including without limitation the warranties of title, noninfringement, merchantability, and fitness for a particular purpose. Your use of the Web site is at your own risk, and you assume full responsibility for all costs that arise out of its use. Neither SRNT nor any of its officers, directors, partners, employees, affiliates, subsidiaries, agents, representatives, or licensors shall be liable to you or any third party for any compensatory, direct, indirect, incidental, special, exemplary, punitive, or consequential damages, or attorneys' fees, arising out of your use of the Web site or

inability to gain access to or use the Web site or out of any breach of any warranty, even if such parties have been advised of the possibility of such damages or such damages were foreseeable.

E-mail Privacy Policy

1. Through membership in SRNT, members are establishing a business relationship with SRNT and authorizing use of the e-mail addresses provided to the organization.
1. SRNT may utilize the e-mail addresses provided by its members for communication and promotion of SRNT events, meetings, education programs, products, and services, unless specifically instructed otherwise by an individual member.
2. SRNT shall provide recipients of all mass e-mail communications the opportunity to unsubscribe from e-mail distribution lists.
3. SRNT may provide the e-mail addresses of primary member contacts to third parties through the SRNT Web site, sale of mailing lists and directories, and direct communication, unless specifically instructed otherwise by an individual member.

Fax Privacy Policy

2. Through membership in SRNT, members are establishing a business relationship with SRNT and authorizing use of the fax numbers provided to the organization.
4. SRNT may utilize the numbers provided by its members for communication and promotion of SRNT events, meetings, education programs, products and services, unless specifically instructed otherwise by an individual member.
5. SRNT may provide the fax numbers of its members to third parties through the SRNT Web site, sale of mailing lists and directories, and direct communication, unless specifically instructed otherwise by an individual member.

Opt-Out Policy

SRNT will provide each member equal opportunity to opt out of any communication method utilized by SRNT.

Listserv: SRNT provides a member-only listserv to provide up-to-date information and promote discussion among members. All members have access to post information on the listserv in accordance with list rules.

9.3 Media Relations Policy

Only the president, executive director or other individual(s) designated by the board are authorized to speak with the media on behalf of. The president, executive director and/or the board designate will discuss message development and coordinate who will handle which press inquiries.

Staff, board members and members acting in a capacity within a committee are not authorized to make statements, provide information for distribution, or provide background information unless specifically directed to do so by the president or executive director.

Public Policy Statements
The board may agree to approve a resolution on any public issue for which it feels a "voice from SRNT" could improve the public dialogue, and the board members or puplic policy committee members are encouraged to propose such resolutions for the board's consideration. Once approved, the executive director is authorized to add SRNT's name to others' statements, letters, proclamations, etc.

9.4 Crisis Communication Policy

General Policy
SRNT is committed to taking a preemptive approach to public relations crises, using disclosure whenever possible as the preferred strategy for preventing or minimizing public relations crises.

Only the president and executive director are authorized to speak to the news media in a crisis without specific approval from the president.

Crisis Prevention
Staff will maintain regular contact with the president, advising him or her when internal issues or developments appear likely to lead to public relations problems (whether internally, with the membership, or externally).

Similarly, the board will notify staff of any developments that may escalate into public relations crises.

Crisis Response
When crises erupt, staff will gather and verify information about the crisis, assess the severity of the crisis, and develop strategies concerning how information is to be released, who should speak for SRNT, and who is to be notified.

Staff also will confer with the president or his/her designate, as appropriate, to work out logistical details of releasing information, and distribute verified information as quickly as possible to internal and external audiences.

Crisis Communication Procedure

I. Types of Crises

A. Foreseeable Crises
1. Crisis assessment: board president will be notified immediately of an emerging crisis and will determine the necessary strategy and who should be involved.
2. Formation of a crisis team: The team will gather as many details as possible, recommend strategies for internal and external communication, and select an appropriate spokesperson. The president has final approval of the recommendations.

B. Sudden Crises
1. Immediate action: When the sudden occurrence of a severe crisis precludes convening a crisis team, staff will draft and implement a strategy immediately upon approval by the president (or his or her designee).
2. After implementing "first-wave" communication strategy, the executive director and the president (or his or her designee) will convene the crisis team to develop ongoing strategy.

II. Establishing a Clear Line of Communication

Communications will be authorized to gather and verify information in a crisis, and will be the only department authorized to release information.

III. Releasing Information Internally

Whenever practical, the executive director will attempt to inform the board and staff of crises in any appropriate manner before details are released externally.

IV. Informing Outside Parties

Staff will coordinate notification of key member stakeholders and other parties likely to be affected by or strongly interested in the crisis.

V. Releasing Information to the News Media

A. The executive director will work to supply verifiable details to the news media as rapidly as possible.
B. After releasing information, the executive director will monitor the news coverage and quickly correct any errors that are made and its assessment of the lessons learned and any new guidelines for the next crisis.

VI. Evaluation and Follow-Up

A. The executive director will document the news coverage surrounding a crisis, including wire stories, newspaper articles, radio, and television broadcasts.
B. When the crisis is past, the executive director will supply the board with a summary of news coverage.

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9.5 PROCEDURE FOR THE ISSUANCE OF POLICY STATEMENTS

As an international society representing nicotine and tobacco scientists, SRNT is committed to ensuring that tobacco control policy and practice reflect the best scientific evidence available. One way that the Society does so is to issue statements regarding tobacco control policies that are being considered or being debated in the broader scientific, public health, and public policy communities. To create a policy statement, the Society will review the available empirical evidence on the issue in question in order to determine whether sufficient evidence exists to warrant taking a position. If insufficient evidence exists to support a specific position, the Society may still choose to draft a statement that makes that point and outlines what is and is not know about the subject. In doing so, the Society recognizes that unanimity of opinion on all issues is not attainable. Policy statements are meant to represent a general consensus of the majority of the membership. This document describes how these statements are produced. The process outlined below is required for the generation of a policy statement that represent the official position of the Society. Individual SRNT members are welcome to comment on policy matters on their own behalf, so long as they do not state or imply that their comments represent official SRNT policy.

Overview of the Process

The Policy Committee drafts Policy Statements for SRNT. Draft statements are successively reviewed by the SRNT Executive Committee and the SRNT membership prior to approval and dissemination. Requests for creation of a policy statement may come from diverse sources and are screened by the SRNT Executive Committee, prior to forwarding to the Policy Committee for drafting. The process aims to balance the need for timeliness in generating policy statements with the requirement that statements accurately reflect the views of the SRNT membership. The Chair of the Policy Committee is responsible for seeing that the process outlined below moves forward in an expeditious manner.

Detailed process:

1. Requests for SRNT to issue a policy statement on a particular issue may come from diverse sources, including individual members, SRNT committees, the SRNT officers or board of directors, a government body, or an outside organization or individual. All requests for SRNT policy statements must be submitted to the Chair of the Policy Committee, who will forward them to the Executive Committee for approval. If the Executive Committee determines that the topic has sufficient merit to warrant action, they will ask the Policy Committee to prepare a policy statement on behalf of the Society.

2. The Policy Committee Chair will submit the request to the Policy Committee and identify an individual to draft the statement. Simultaneously, the Policy Committee Chair will notify the SRNT membership via the listserve that a statement is being developed. Any member wishing to provide data or commentary regarding the issue will be invited to send it to the individual drafting the statement and to the Policy Committee Chair. The Policy

Committee Chair may invite SRNT members or nonmembers not serving on the Committee to participate in drafting or reviewing the statement in cases where Policy Committee members do not have the necessary expertise or range of views to address the issue.

3. The draft policy statement will be sent to the entire Policy Committee for review, editing, and approval.

4. Simultaneously, the draft Policy Statement be submitted to the SRNT Executive Committee for approval, The review will occur by email or discussion at a regular or special meeting or conference call. The discussion will have these possible outcomes:
   a. Approval to submit to the membership for comment (as is or with suggested changes)
   b. Return to the Policy Committee with request for revision and reconsideration
   c. Disapproval (e.g., decision that the issue is not appropriate for an SRNT Policy Statement at this time).

5. The Policy Statement approved by the Executive Committee will be forwarded to the membership for review and comment. This will be done by posting it on the SRNT Listserve. Separately, an email will be sent to all members with email access so that those not on the Listserve can receive the document for review. Members can submit comments to entire Listserve or directly to the Executive Director, who will keep a log of all responses and forward them to the Chair of the Policy Committee. Member suggestions to the draft will be carefully reviewed, but to ensure timeliness, members will be asked to approve or disapprove the statement as posted on the listserve (e.g., there will be no approval contingent on specific changes). The goal of this process is to ensure that the statement is a firmly founded on scientific evidence and to determine whether sufficient consensus within the Society for the position taken. The process does not require that every SRNT member agree with the statement; instead, it aims to identify whether there is agreement in principle or a general consensus among the membership in support of the position.
   a. Insufficient consensus will be operationally defined as objection to the statement by more than 10% of all SRNT members with email access (e.g., not 10% of respondents). When this happens, the draft statement will not be approved. The Executive Committee will discuss and decide whether to drop the issue or to request that the Policy Committee redraft the statement based on member comments. In this case the revised draft would be reapproved by the Executive Committee and reposted on the Listserve for member approval..

6. The Policy Committee Chair will summarize member input and, based on these, may edit the draft Policy Statement. The Chair will present the revised Policy Statement, along with a summary of the member comments, to the

Executive Committee for review and final decisionmaking (approval as is, approval with further revisions, or disapproval). If the members have added important points not included in the initial draft, the Policy Committee Chair or Executive Committee may ask for the redrafted statement to be resubmitted to the membership before proceeding with final Executive Committee approval

7. The approved SRNT Policy Statement will be posted on the SRNT listserve and SRNT Website and forwarded to the requesting organization, if appropriate.

8. Approval at the levels of the Executive Committee and Policy Committee will require two-thirds of those present voting yes.

9. Every effort will be made to produce Policy Statements expeditiously. To that end, the following is expected at each step in order to produce a completed statement in 15 business days (e.g., 3 weeks) from start of the process:
   a. Step 1 (Executive Committee approval of the concept and identification of an individual to draft the statement) will be completed within 3 business days
   b. Step 2 (first draft of policy statement) will be generated within 5 business days.
   c. Steps 3 and 4 (approval of the draft statement by the Policy Committee and Executive Committee) will be completed within 3 business days
   d. Step 5 (member comments) will be accepted for 3 business days.
   e. Step 6 (summarizing of member statements, and final Executive Committee review and approval) will be completed within 3 business days.

10. In rare special cases, more rapid action is needed to produce a statement that can influence policymaking. In these cases, the process described above will be followed but altered to permit shorter a time frame so that a statement can be generated within 5 business days (1 week):
    a. Step 1 (Executive Committee and Policy Committee approval of concept) will be completed within 1 business day.
    b. Step 2 (first draft of policy statement) will be generated within 2 business days.
    c. Steps 3, 4, and 5 will be done simultaneously (review of the statement by Policy Committee, Executive Committee, and membership) will be allowed 24 hours (1 business day).
    d. Step 6 (final approval) will be completed in 1 business day.

9.6 SRNT Publication & Presentation Dissemination Approval Policy

1. Scope & Applicability

This policy applies to all materials, publications, public statements, and presentations developed under the auspices of SRNT (including SRNT Networks and Chapters).

- **Exemptions:** Content created specifically for official SRNT-sponsored events (e.g., SRNT Annual Meetings, official webinars) is exempt from this policy.
- **Clarification:** When in doubt regarding applicability, submitters must request clarification prior to public release.

2. Submission Process

- **Submission Channel:** Requestors must submit a formal written request to the designated SRNT Staff Liaison.
- **Required Information:** Submissions must include:
  - Purpose and desired action
  - Project timeline and external deadlines
  - Responsible parties
  - Anticipated financial costs or staff support requirements
  - Relevant supporting documents or drafts
- **Timeline & Deadlines:** Requests are accepted on a rolling basis. To be considered, complete requests must be received at least **14 business days prior** to a scheduled SRNT Board of Directors meeting. Expedited reviews are not available; requestors should submit materials well in advance of external deadlines.

3. Staff Review

Upon receipt, the SRNT Staff Liaison reviews the submission for completeness and identifies any operational, administrative, or financial considerations before forwarding it to Leadership.

4. Leadership & Professional Review

The request is forwarded to the SRNT Board of Directors for evaluation. On a case-by-case basis, the Board may seek legal or other professional advisory counsel prior to issuing a decision.

9.6 SRNT Publication & Presentation Dissemination Approval Policy (continued)

5. Decision Outcomes

The SRNT Board of Directors may issue one of the following decisions:

- **Approved** (as submitted)
- **Approved with Conditions** (contingent on specified modifications)
- **Revisions Requested** (requires resubmission)
- **Deferred** (pending further information)
- **Declined**

6. Conflicts of Interest

Any individual directly involved in the creation of the request, the proposed work, or having a competing interest must disclose the conflict and recuse themselves from all deliberation and voting.

7. Documentation & Communication

All decisions, conditions, and next steps will be documented in the official SRNT Board meeting minutes. The SRNT Board (or its designated staff representative) will communicate the final outcome to the requestor in writing.

8. Final Content Review & Release

Final versions of all publications, official statements, and public-facing products representing SRNT must receive final written verification from the SRNT Staff Liaison/Board Chair prior to official submission, publication, distribution, or public release to ensure all requested conditions were met.

9. Record Retention

The SRNT Staff Liaison will archive the original request, supporting documentation, approval decision, and final approved deliverable in SRNT’s official document repository.