

American Association of Neurological Surgeons Neurosurgeons and Industry Policy Statement

Contact(s):
Betsy van Die

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Background Facts

Industry and medicine have long worked hand in hand toward the advancement of technology. In 1926, Harvey Cushing, the founding father of neurosurgery, collaborated on development of the monopolar cautery, known as "the Bovie" with W.T. Bovie, a professor of biophysics at Harvard University. Many of contemporary neurosurgery's technological breakthroughs have come about as a result of the neurosurgeon/industry relationship. Neurosurgeons by themselves simply do not have the resources or capability to develop the devices, take them through the regulatory process, and bring them to widespread commercial use.

The numerous neurosurgical innovations over the last century have improved treatment efficacy and patient outcomes for many neurological conditions and diseases. Today, these medical advances are recognized as lifesaving interventions that have positively impacted thousands of patients. Some of the neurosurgical advances that have been made possible through the surgeon/industry collaboration include:

- Stereotactic radiosurgery (gamma knife, LINAC)
- Minimally invasive spine surgery
- Endovascular therapy
- Carotid angioplasty and stenting
- Deep brain stimulation and vagus nerve stimulation
- Imaging technology (MRI and image-guided surgery)
- Computer-assisted surgery
- Cortical language mapping

Policy

1. The AANS believes that the ethical care of patients is the highest priority for neurosurgeons and embraces this philosophy through its leadership and its public/professional programs.
2. The AANS understands that there may be contractual relationships between physicians and device manufacturers, and that these relationships have a potential for creating bias.
3. Those members who have payment or contractual relationships with industry are required to disclose the relationship prior to any educational presentation.
4. The AANS has taken deliberate steps to prevent industry from unethical influence within the organization, its sponsored educational meetings, and its patient/public education initiatives, precluding biased promotion or support of medical devices, procedures or practice recommendations. The AANS has formulated guidelines that regulate the relationship between the organization, its members, and the medical industry.