

ONE MONTH TO TWO MONTHS

DRAFT FOR DISCUSSION: CR DOCUMENT DEVELOPMENT AND REVIEW PROCESS 6-18-08

Background & Justification

The Collegium Ramazzini is an independent, international academy committed to advancing occupational and environmental health. The Collegium serves as a bridge between the worlds of scientific discovery, social policy, and public consciousness. Development and communication of statements, scientific reviews, and position papers are central to fulfillment of the Collegium mission. These documents serve to guide legislators, regulators, and other decision makers. Collegium statements communicate the policy implications of scientific findings in order to work toward solutions of occupational and environmental health problems. The Collegium focuses particularly on the identification of preventable injuries and illness that are due to remediable risk factors in the workplace and environment throughout the world.

To this end, the Collegium disseminates Statements, Reviews, and Papers. They are based on the best available relevant science. They consider the diversity of local resources, practices, and conditions where these communications may be received around the world. They embody an ethical approach to occupational and environmental health practice.

The Collegium Document Review Committee (DRC) was established in 2007 to recommend a procedure to move from concept to completion efficiently and also assure that interested members have ample opportunity for participating in document development.

Recommended process

1. **Proposal:** Any Fellow of the Collegium can propose that a Statement be developed for consideration by the Collegium. The proposal should be brief (preferably 1-2 pages) and include the following information: Topic, type of document (e.g., Brief Statement, Comprehensive Scientific Review with recommendations, Position Paper, etc.), proposed author(s), intended audience and publication venue, intended impact, whether or why it is timely, deadline for completion, and the competing interests of any authors (e.g., commercial or consulting relationships that may be perceived as creating a conflict). Proposals can either be presented at the annual meeting or be circulated electronically through the General Secretariat to the entire membership of the Collegium. In assembling the writing group and describing the document, the lead author(s) should be mindful of the economic, legal, and political diversity of settings in which members of the Collegium are active and where the document may be used as well as the importance of all CR recommendations reflecting ethical public health practice.
2. **Endorsement of Concept:** The authors are obliged to consider all members' comments that are received within 1 month of issuance of the proposal. The authors

will then present a revised proposal to the Collegium Executive Committee (EC) for endorsement. The EC will assure that proposed documents are consistent with the mission of the Collegium and that the writing group includes people with the expertise to produce a useful document that is ready to be approved and disseminated by the Collegium. The EC will act within 1 month of receiving a request to endorse a concept, either by endorsing the concept and writing group or by communicating to the lead authors any concerns that must be resolved before approval.

3. Notification of Concept Approval: The CR membership will be notified electronically (or by fax or mail for those without internet access) when a Document CONCEPT has been approved by the EC. Members may indicate within one month of delivery of notification if they would like to be considered to join the writing team, or if they are willing to serve as informal or formal reviewers. Members should also contact authors within one month of delivery of notification if they identify issues they wish to be addressed by the writing team.
4. Consultation and assistance: As progress is made or questions arise during document development, authors are encouraged to communicate with the DRC and/or the EC.
5. Peer Review
 - 5.1. The corresponding author will send an electronic copy of a completed draft along with suggestions for reviewers to the DRC. Everyone involved in the development of the document to that point should be identified, even if they are not listed as authors. Actual or potential competing interests of authors should be listed in the proposal.
 - 5.2. A DRC liaison will select reviewers from Collegium members and others and obtain two or more timely reviews within 6 weeks. Reviewers will be asked to comment on the accuracy, completeness, and relevance to the Collegium mission of any scientific presentation as well as on whether the scientific presentation provides satisfactory or compelling justification for any policy statements. Reviews will identify any potential ethical issues and also any concerns relevant to the diverse economic, social, political, and legal settings in which the document will be used.
 - 5.3. The review comments will be communicated to the corresponding author without identification of the reviewers. The document may be revised to address review comments or the writing group may choose to respond to the comments without document revision.
 - 5.4. A final proposal, including an executive summary, along with a memorandum indicating how each review comment was addressed will be submitted to the DRC. A complete document package will consist of the proposed document, peer review comments, authors' responses, and DRC notes). The DRC liaison

- will then either present the packet to the EC along with relevant information about the review process or may engage with the writing group to resolve any outstanding issues.
6. Document approval. Upon receipt of the completed document package, the Executive Committee will decide on one of two possible methods of document review and approval, depending on the nature of the document, considerations of timeliness, and other relevant factors:
- 6.1. Submit the proposed document to CR members for final comment and approval.
- 6.1.1 Circulate the proposed document to all members electronically or by fax or mail and accept comments from members within a 2 week period following delivery. The E.C. will consult with the authors and make revisions in the proposed document as deemed appropriate within 2 weeks.
- 6.1.1.1. Circulate a final proposed document to all Collegium members for a vote to:
- 6.1.1.2. Accept the document as is as a CR document;
- 6.1.1.3. Accept the document after minor (specified) edits, factual corrections or addition of relevant references;
- 6.1.1.4. Disapprove the document in its current form. Members expressing this preference will be encouraged to specify the basis for their recommending rejection.
- 6.1.1.5. A document receiving approving of at least 2/3 of members who vote will be accepted. A minimum of 90 total votes received within 4 weeks are required for the decision to become effective.
- 6.1.1.6. If less than 90 total votes are received on a proposed document, the EC has the option of using the second method of approval of a Collegium document (see below).
- 6.1.1.7 If compelling and significant issues of science, policy, politics, ethics, or fairness arise during the review and comment process, the EC may at its discretion choose to withhold approval of the document until the issues are aired and resolved.
- 6.2 The EC may elect to approve, conditionally approve, or disapprove the proposed document without a formal vote of the Collegium membership, if timeliness, nature of document or other specified conditions warrant. If compelling and significant issues of science, policy, politics, ethics, or fairness arise during the review and comment process, the EC may at its discretion choose to withhold approval of the document until the issues are aired and resolved. The EC will make this decision within 3 weeks of its submission by the DRC. The decision of

the EC will be submitted to the members along with an explanation about why the proposed document was not submitted for full membership review and approval.

7. Annual Reporting: Prior to the Annual Meeting, members will receive a report of all documents proposed, approved for development, completed, and approved for dissemination during the past year. Consideration should be given to a scheduled discussion of documents at the annual meeting of Fellows.