

CODE OF CONDUCT + MEMBERSHIP ELIGIBILITY POLICY

1. Purpose and Scope

The GI Cancers Alliance (GICA) is founded on collaboration, mutual respect, professional integrity, and a shared commitment to improving outcomes for people affected by gastrointestinal cancers. Membership represents more than participation in individual programs or activities; it reflects a commitment to work constructively with other member organizations in support of a shared, unified voice for the GI cancer community.

This policy establishes standards for prospective and current member organizations and applies, as appropriate, to their representatives participating in GICA activities, including staff, volunteers, advocates, partners, and other authorized participants.

2. Core Standards of Professional Conduct

Respect. Treat others with respect, courtesy, and dignity, including respect for ethnic, national, cultural, professional, and organizational differences.

Non-discrimination and professional behavior. Do not engage in discriminatory, harassing, retaliatory, intimidating, bullying, coercive, threatening, or disruptive behavior. Do not knowingly disparage member organizations, their representatives, volunteers, staff, or patient communities.

Confidentiality. Protect confidential matters, including nonpublic communications, patient information, research information, sponsor information, program plans, and event materials. Do not disclose confidential information without appropriate authorization.

Honesty and good faith. Act honestly, transparently, with integrity, and in good faith in matters involving GICA and its community.

Conflicts of interest. Disclose actual, potential, or perceived material conflicts of interest and recuse from deliberations, assignments, or decisions when appropriate.

Professionalism. Conduct activities in a manner consistent with GICA's mission, purpose, values, and collaborative environment and that supports rather than undermines the work of the Alliance.

Authorization and representation. Do not speak, communicate, contract, or otherwise act on behalf of GICA without prior authorization. Use of GICA's name, logo, membership status, programs, or other identifying information must comply with applicable GICA policies and permissions.

Legal compliance. Comply with applicable local, state, federal, and other governing laws and regulations.

3. Membership Eligibility

Organizations seeking membership must demonstrate that their mission, governance, activities, and organizational conduct are compatible with GICA's mission, values, reputation, and collaborative purpose. Applicants must:

- **Organizational history and established operations.** Applicant organizations must have been legally established and actively operating for a minimum of twelve (12) months prior to submitting an application for membership. Applicants must demonstrate an established and continuing record of substantive activities consistent with their stated mission.
- **Supporting documentation.** Applicants may be required to provide reasonable documentation demonstrating organizational standing and activity, which may include incorporation or registration information; nonprofit, charitable, NGO, or equivalent status where applicable; current governance or Board information; a public website or other organizational presence; and examples of patient or caregiver programs, advocacy initiatives, educational activities, research participation, community engagement, public resources, partnerships, or other documented mission-related activities during the preceding twelve (12) months.
- Newly formed organizations that have not yet completed twelve (12) months of active operations are not yet eligible for membership. Such organizations may apply after satisfying the minimum operating-history requirement.
- Demonstrate meaningful alignment with the mission and purpose of GICA.
- Conduct activities with integrity, professionalism, transparency, and respect for patients, caregivers, healthcare professionals, advocacy organizations, and other stakeholders.
- Demonstrate a willingness and ability to collaborate constructively with other Alliance members.
- Maintain appropriate governance, organizational accountability, and conflict-of-interest practices.
- Provide complete and accurate information during the application and review process.

- Agree to comply with this Code of Conduct and Membership Eligibility Policy and other applicable GICA policies.

Membership is not automatic upon application or satisfaction of minimum eligibility requirements. GICA reserves the right to approve, defer, condition, or decline an application when reasonably determined to be in the best interests of the Alliance and consistent with its mission and governance responsibilities.

4. Applicant Conduct During Review

Applicants are expected to respect the integrity, independence, and timing of the GICA membership review process. Conduct during the application period may be considered when evaluating compatibility with collaborative membership.

Attempts to circumvent the established review process through harassment, intimidation, repeated or excessive unsolicited contact, pressure directed toward GICA members, sponsors, advisors, staff, Board members, committee members, or other stakeholders, or efforts to obtain preferential treatment outside the established process may be considered as part of the membership review.

5. Respectful and Collaborative Organizational Conduct

Prospective and current member organizations are expected to interact professionally and in good faith. Organizations shall not engage in harassment, intimidation, bullying, retaliation, threats, coercion, knowingly false or misleading representations, or sustained conduct intended to damage the reputation, operations, partnerships, or professional relationships of GICA or its member organizations.

6. Material Disputes and Legal Proceedings

Because GICA is a collaborative membership organization founded upon mutual trust and a shared collective mission, active adversarial relationships between prospective members and existing Alliance members may create circumstances incompatible with effective Alliance membership.

An applicant organization must disclose any pending or reasonably anticipated litigation, arbitration, formal legal demand, regulatory proceeding, or other material adversarial dispute involving GICA, a current GICA member organization, or an

officer or senior representative of a member organization when the dispute arises from that person's organizational role.

An applicant that is actively pursuing litigation or another material adversarial legal proceeding against GICA or a current GICA member organization will ordinarily not be eligible while litigation is pending when the dispute could reasonably impair trust, collaboration, organizational relationships, or GICA's ability to fulfill its collective mission.

The existence of a legal proceeding shall not automatically be treated as misconduct. GICA may consider the nature of the proceeding, its relationship to Alliance activities, its potential impact on collaboration and member relationships, and other relevant circumstances. GICA may defer consideration of a membership application until a material dispute or proceeding has been resolved.

7. Duty to Disclose and Conflicts of Interest

Applicants and members have an ongoing responsibility to disclose circumstances that could create an actual, potential, or perceived material conflict affecting participation in GICA. Failure to disclose material information relevant to membership eligibility may constitute grounds for denial, deferral, suspension, or termination of membership.

8. Independence of Member Organizations

Each GICA member remains an independent organization responsible for its own governance, policies, programs, partnerships, communications, referrals, and organizational decisions. Membership does not authorize one member to speak for, direct, pressure, interfere with, or otherwise represent another member organization without that organization's express authorization.

GICA respects the independent procedures and decisions of its member organizations and does not require one member organization to alter its internal processes or decisions at the request of another member or applicant.

9. Use of GICA Name, Identity, and Affiliation

Applicants may not represent themselves as members, partners, affiliates, collaborators, or representatives of GICA unless and until such status has been

formally approved. GICA's name, logo, membership status, programs, partnerships, or other identifying information may not be used in promotional, fundraising, commercial, advocacy, media, or other public-facing communications in a manner that states or implies endorsement or affiliation without prior written authorization.

10. Membership Review

Membership decisions are made through GICA's established review process. In evaluating an application, GICA may consider relevant factors including:

- Mission alignment and demonstrated contribution to the GI cancer community.
- Organizational history, governance, accountability, and professional conduct.
- Relationships with patients, caregivers, healthcare professionals, advocacy organizations, and other stakeholders.
- Actual, potential, or perceived conflicts of interest.
- Ability to participate constructively in a collaborative alliance.
- Compliance with this policy and other applicable GICA requirements.
- Any circumstances reasonably determined to present material legal, operational, reputational, governance, or mission-related risk to GICA or its membership.

11. Continuing Standards for Members

Membership eligibility standards continue after admission. A material change in circumstances, including conduct that substantially conflicts with GICA's mission or this policy, development of a material organizational conflict, or initiation of adversarial proceedings that materially impair collaboration, may prompt review of continued membership.

12. Accountability, Review, and Enforcement

Potential violations or membership concerns will be considered based on the facts and circumstances reasonably available to GICA. Factors may include the nature, severity, frequency, intent, impact, prior conduct, likelihood of recurrence, and effect on patients, member organizations, GICA, or the broader collaborative environment.

Depending upon the circumstances, appropriate action may include guidance, written warning, corrective action, mediation, restriction of participation, temporary suspension, or termination of membership or affiliation. Serious misconduct may warrant immediate action without prior warning.

Where appropriate, an organization may be informed of a material concern and provided a reasonable opportunity to respond before final action is taken. Final decisions will be made in accordance with GICA's applicable policies.

13. Review and Acknowledgment

This policy will be reviewed periodically by GICA leadership and the Board of Directors and updated as appropriate to reflect organizational needs, governance practices, and applicable legal requirements.

Prospective and current member organizations may be required to acknowledge that they have reviewed, understand, and agree to comply with this policy as a condition of application or continued membership.