



Guidelines for Position Paper Development

SAHM [position papers](#) represent the official opinions and recommendations of the Society for Adolescent Health and Medicine (SAHM; herein referred to as “the Society”) on important issues relevant to the health and well-being of adolescents and young adults (AYA). Position papers reflect the mission and values of the Society. Upon approval by the Society’s Board of Directors (BOD), position papers are published in the [Journal of Adolescent Health](#), posted on the Society’s website and referenced in Index Medicus as authored by SAHM, along with the names of each of the individual authors.

The purpose of SAHM position papers is to affirm SAHM’s membership values and perspectives on significant policy and clinical issues and to make explicit SAHM’s advocacy agenda and guidance. The intended audience includes SAHM members, other AYA-serving professionals, policy makers, governmental officials, and the general public in order to:

- Promote optimal health and well-being for all AYA.
- Inform and assist in the development of improved services for AYA.
- Provide justification for an opinion or recommendation on issues relevant to the health and well-being of AYA that may be controversial, need clarification, or represent an AYA advocacy issue.

How to Submit a Proposal for a SAHM Position Paper

Position paper proposals (new papers and/or revisions of existing papers) may be proposed by any of the following individuals/groups:

- SAHM member(s)
- SAHM Committee or Special Interest Group (SIG)
- SAHM Publications Editorial Board
- SAHM Board of Directors

The SAHM BOD can also consider proposals for publication of joint statements in collaboration with other professional organizations or endorse the previously published statement of another professional organization. Such requests are to be directed to the SAHM Director of Publications.

Position Paper Intent Form – [\(download a position paper intent form\)](#)

- Proposal intent for a new position
- Proposal intent to revise an existing position

The position paper intent form is the mechanism by which the BOD approves the initiation and coordination of position paper development. The intent identifies the topic, the need, outline of the positions, the methodology to be used, and the authoring group of the proposed position paper.

The authoring group is responsible for completing and submitting the intent form to the Director of Publications. Submissions will first be reviewed by the PEB and a member of the PEB will be assigned as the PEB representative (herein referred to as “the representative”) for that intent. The PEB will determine if the proposed position materials are complete and recommend revisions if applicable prior to submission to the BOD for review. The PEB may seek consultation from others (Executive Committee or peer review) on the submitted intent document as needed. The PEB will initiate communication with the lead author or next designee. The assigned PEB representative will return the intent form to the lead author with applicable feedback within two weeks. The expectation is that the lead author has worked with the chair(s) of the appropriate SIG or committee to assemble an authorship team that is consistent with current [PEB authorship guidelines](#). If this proposed paper is a revision of an existing statement: please refer to the section below under: Duration of SAHM Position Papers for additional authorship rules.

Upon satisfactory review of the intent document by the PEB, the Director of Publications will present the intent form to the BOD for review at their next scheduled meeting. ***The intent form must receive BOD approval before the authoring group creates a draft of the position paper.***

SAHM Board of Directors Meeting Schedule

The following dates are when initial intent forms need to be submitted to ensure it can be reviewed by the SAHM BOD at their next scheduled meeting (*pending approval of the Director of Publications*). Check SAHM website for the most [up-to-date deadlines](#).

Authoring Group Criteria

Authors of SAHM position papers must be members in good standing with the Society. The lead author can request a non-member consultant to be added for BOD approval. Authoring groups may include a maximum of ten individuals, with assurance that all have

met the authorship criteria provided below. Requests for additional authors above the maximum allotment must be submitted in writing to the Director of Publications along with the intent form. The authoring group should include the diversity, interdisciplinary nature and geographic spread of the Society.

To be listed as a contributing author on a SAHM position paper, the author must meet all the following criteria:

- Has made substantial contributions to the conception or design of the positions; or the acquisition, analysis or interpretation of data supporting these positions.
- Drafted the work or made revisions critically important to the intellectual content.
- Provided final approval prior to submission.
- Agreed to be accountable for all aspects of the work in ensuring that questions related to the accuracy or integrity of any part of the work are appropriately investigated and resolved.

Individuals who participate in the development of the paper but do not meet all the above-mentioned criteria can be listed in the acknowledgements at the end of the paper as contributors.

Financial Disclosures – ([download a financial disclosure form](#))

Each member of the authoring group must disclose all conflicts of interest and affiliations with industry, government and others by completing a financial disclosure form. Authors must disclose all financial interests or relationships within the past five years and the foreseeable future that are relevant to the subject matter or content of the position paper.

The collection and submission of each listed author's completed disclosure forms is the responsibility of the lead author and must be included alongside the completed draft paper. Financial disclosure forms will be maintained by the SAHM Office.

Guidelines for Developing a Draft Position Paper

Once an intent form is approved by the SAHM BOD, author groups have six months from the date they are notified of approval to submit a completed position paper draft. Completed drafts are to be submitted to the assigned PEB representative and the Director of Publications. Requests for an extension must be submitted in writing to the assigned PEB representative and the Director of Publications. If a draft position paper is not submitted within six months of the intent form's approval and an extension request was not submitted or approved, a new intent form is required before the draft position paper can be reviewed by the SAHM BOD.

Structure of Position Papers

Position papers should be limited to 2,500 words counting from the statement of the problem through the summary and not including the abstract, initial listing of the positions or references.

Position papers should include the following elements:

Title: The title must reflect the intent/purpose of the positions clearly and concisely.

Abstract: The abstract should be a concise paragraph (250 words maximum) that includes the purpose and overall concept(s) of the position paper.

SAHM Positions: Each paper should list SAHM's numbered positions (1-2 sentences each) at the beginning of the paper. New positions must be consistent (non-conflicting) with established positions, unless an explanation is provided discussing the change.

Statement of the Problem: **This section should serve as an introductory section of the position** paper, where the authors provide a concise overview of the topic and why it is important, and brief statements of shortcomings of current practice, programs or policy.

Methods: The methods are intended to demonstrate how the initial positions were conceived and to provide a description of the review process. Example from a recent position paper is provided below:

“The author group, comprised of clinicians and researchers with expertise in adolescent sexual and reproductive health, developed the stated positions and their supporting contents from reports and technical guidance from national and international organizations and consensus from specialists in the care of AYAs. The positions and supporting content were then reviewed by external expert reviewers, and the paper was reviewed and approved by the SAHM Publication Editorial Board and the SAHM Board of Directors. These positions and recommendations to support our understanding of AYAs' development, drivers of sexual and reproductive health and rights education and healthcare are further supported by the socio-ecological model, life course and developmental theories, and an intersectionality framework.”

Positions and Recommendations: To include up-to-date evidence-based information or expert consensus that provides justification and leads to practical recommendations for practice, programs and/or policies to actualize each of the stated positions. This section should be organized with each position as a header followed by the evidence or expert consensus which justifies the position and the actionable recommendations to the reader.

Summary: A brief three to five sentence summary of the most important take home points from the position paper. The positions themselves should not be restated.

Authors: Members of the authoring group can be listed either in the traditional research style (first author, senior author, etc.) or in alphabetical order, along with their affiliations, and disclosures listed at the end of each position paper.

References: The references serve as the scientific justification and should be peer-reviewed research articles, public policy documents or state-of-the-art articles or books from the literature. There should be no more than 35 references. References should be formatted according to the current requirements of the *Journal of Adolescent Health*.

Important note: Position papers are not intended to be review papers, but rather a statement of SAHM positions with a concise presentation of background material specifically related to those positions and actionable recommendations. Review papers should be submitted to the *Journal of Adolescent Health* per journal guidelines.

Overview of Review Process for Submitted Draft Position Papers

Draft position papers are first reviewed by both the assigned PEB representative and the Director of Publications. All position papers submitted must be of a quality similar to that of a manuscript that would be submitted for publication in a peer-reviewed journal. As such, all position papers must follow the structure outlined above and be carefully proofread for grammar, punctuation and readability or they will be returned to the authoring group.

If the PEB determines the position paper is ready, it is forwarded for external peer review. After the external peer review, the PEB representative will share provided feedback to the authors for revisions, or forward the paper to the BOD, if comments are minor. The authors are expected to respond to peer-review comments with a detailed explanation of responses and changes within four weeks. The PEB will review the revisions and determine if the revised paper is ready for submission to the BOD for review.

Upon review, the BOD will decide to do one of the following:

- Approve the completed paper as presented
- Approve the completed paper with minor edits
- Recommend significant edits and encourage resubmission of the paper
- Reject the completed paper if not aligned with the approved intent document

If the completed paper is approved by the BOD, it will be submitted to the Managing Editor of the *Journal of Adolescent Health* for publication. The authoring group will be asked to assist with drafting language for SAHM to announce the newly published position to the membership and press releases.

If the paper is approved with minor edits, the representative from PEB will return the paper to the lead author and share the BOD requested edits. The authoring group will be given two months to resubmit the revised paper to the Director of Publications with a detailed explanation of the responses and revisions. If applicable, the authoring group may submit a written explanation for consideration describing why BOD requested changes were not made. The PEB will review the revisions and determine if the BOD feedback has been adequately addressed or requires further review by the BOD. If the PEB feels that the revisions were adequately addressed, they will submit the paper to the *Journal of Adolescent Health* for publication.

Publication of SAHM Position Papers

Approved position papers will be published in the *Journal of Adolescent Health* and posted on the SAHM website.

The review process for position papers may need to be expedited if there are recommendations of an urgent nature that have a significant and direct impact on the practice of adolescent and young adult health. The Director of Publications will work directly with the Editor-in-Chief of the *Journal of Adolescent Health* to coordinate and expedite the publication process so that the information is disseminated to the membership and readership in a timely fashion.

Because of copyright and reprint concerns, position papers will not be published in other organizations' journals before publication in the *Journal of Adolescent Health*. Exceptions are made if it is previously determined that a joint position paper will be published simultaneously in the *Journal of Adolescent Health* and the official journal of the co-authoring entity.

Duration of SAHM Position Papers

SAHM position papers undergo review five years after initial publication or more often as needed. This review will be initiated by the Director of Publications (as result of a five-year timeline or at the request of the BOD, Special Interest Group or SAHM Committee). The review will be conducted by one of the following groups: subgroup of Publications Editorial Board; the authoring group (see Development Process), other appropriate committee, or by the Executive Committee (EC) – at the request of the Director of Publications or BOD. This review will recommend if the position should be reaffirmed, revised or retired. The recommendations from the review will be reported to the Director of Publications who will report to the BOD.

Revision Process

The lead author and their respective authoring groups will be expected to conduct a review of their position paper when older than five years from initial publication. In addition, the PEB or the BOD may request a review of a position paper prior to the mandatory review period if there have been significant/important changes to the content of the current position paper under consideration.

If the BOD recommends revising the position paper, then the Director of Publications will contact the most recent lead author. The lead author will contact their authoring group and notify them of the BOD's request to revise. If the lead author can no longer take on this responsibility, they will recommend a SAHM member from the original author group who can fulfill this role. The Director of Publications will ask this member if they would take on the role and responsibility of the lead author in the revision of the position paper. If the lead author agrees that individual will confirm that the most recent authoring group is interested in participating in the revision. If this is not the case, the lead author can identify other group members. For all revisions, the original authors have the right of first refusal. The lead author will work with the chair(s) of the appropriate committee or SIG to assemble a 'revised' authorship team that is consistent with current PEB Authorship Guidelines. Any original authors not participating in the revision will be listed in the acknowledgements. If none of the original authors are participating in the revision, the PEB will identify a new authorship team through consultation with the appropriate committee or SIG.