



Guidelines for Position Paper Development

SAHM Position Papers

SAHM Position Papers represent the official opinions and recommendations of the Society for Adolescent Health and Medicine concerning priority issues relevant to the health and well-being of adolescents and young adults (AYA).

The purpose of SAHM position papers is to affirm SAHM's membership values and perspectives on significant policy and clinical issues and to make SAHM's advocacy agenda and guidance explicit. Intended audiences include SAHM members, other AYA-serving professionals, policy makers, governmental officials, and the general public to:

- Promote optimal health and well-being for all AYA.
- Inform and support the development of improved services for AYA.
- Provide justification for positions and recommendations on issues central to AYA health and well-being, particularly those that may be controversial, require clarification, or represent key advocacy priorities.

Upon approval, they are published in the *Journal of Adolescent Health*, posted on the Society's website, and referenced in Index Medicus as authored by SAHM alongside individual author names.

[Download a printable PDF copy of these guidelines](#)

Author Group Criteria

SAHM Position Papers (*new and/or revisions of an existing paper*) may be proposed by any group of up to ten SAHM members in good standing. The authoring group should include diverse disciplinary representation, interdisciplinary nature and geographic spread of the Society. When appropriate and aligned, at least one international SAHM member author must be included.

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

- Have 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 and/or made revisions critically important to the intellectual content.

- Provided final approval prior to submission.
- Agree 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.

In cases where SAHM membership does not include needed expertise, the lead author may request the inclusion of a non-member consultant. Individuals who contribute to the development of the paper but do not meet the criteria for authorship may be recognized in the acknowledgements section as contributors.

Prior to publication of an approved position paper 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 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.

[Download a Financial Disclosure Form](#)

SAHM Position Paper Submission, Review & Approval Process

Submission Process

Step #1: Pre-Position Paper Intent Consultation

To initiate the process, the authoring group must email the Director of Publications and Executive Director via the provided link below with:

- A 1–2 sentence summary of the issue/topic
- A proposed draft title
- Whether this is a new Position Paper or a revision to an existing paper
- Whether you are requesting to develop a Position Paper or a Position Brief

The Director of Publications will consult with the Executive Committee to determine whether the topic aligns with SAHM's mission and priorities. For time-sensitive matters, the EC may authorize a Position Brief (see below). The Director of Publications will notify the author group if they are approved to proceed with the development and submission of an intent form.

Overview of New Alternative Deliverable: The Position Brief

The *Position Brief* is a limited, non-default mechanism designed to expedite SAHM's

approval and communication of organizational positions in specific, time-sensitive circumstances where timely advocacy is essential. It is not intended to replace or supplant the Society's standard Position Paper pathway.

A Position Brief must include all components required for a Position Paper Intent—justification, position statements, bulleted recommendations, and supporting references—along with an abstract. A Position Brief may be proposed by an authorship group or a SAHM trustee and requires advance approval by the SAHM Executive Committee (EC) before development.

Once approved, the Position Brief follows the same review and approval process as a Position Paper Intent and, upon final approval, will be submitted for publication in the *Journal of Adolescent Health*.

This pathway is intended for **rare and clearly justified use**, allowing SAHM to respond rapidly to emerging or urgent issues, when necessary, while preserving the Position Paper as the Society's primary and preferred vehicle for establishing policy through rigorous, peer-reviewed scholarship.

[Initiate the Process - Email the Director of Publications](#)

Step #2: Submission of a Position Paper Proposal Intent Form

The position paper proposal intent form serves as the mechanism by which the BOD approves the initiation and coordination of position paper development. The intent identifies the topic, justification, position statements, bulleted recommendations, supporting references and the authoring group of the proposed position paper.

For the proposals approved to be published as a position brief, the author group is asked to include an abstract within the intent form.

[Download a Proposal Intent Form](#)

Review/Approval of Submitted Intent Process

Step #3: PEB Liaison Assignment & Initial Review

Upon receipt of a completed intent form, the Director of Publications will appoint a member of the Publications Editorial Board (PEB) to serve as liaison and initiate an initial review of the submission. The Director and liaison will evaluate the intent and provide feedback to the author group if needed. Once deemed ready to advance, the intent will be circulated to all PEB members for full review, and consolidated feedback will be shared with the author group for implementation or response. The assigned liaison will continue to work with the author group throughout the process, serving as the primary communication conduit and ensuring consistent feedback and timeline monitoring.

Step #4: External Review

After completing the initial PEB review process, the revised Position Paper Intent (if applicable) will be shared with at least two external reviewers, who will focus primarily on the evidence base underlying the proposed positions and recommendations. Authors will be required to either implement the feedback received or provide a written response to any recommendations not incorporated.

Step #5: Board of Directors Review & Approval

After completing the external review process, the Director of Publications will bring the intent form to the SAHM Board of Directors (BOD) for review at the next scheduled meeting. If substantive concerns are raised, the BOD may request clarifications or revisions rather than deny intent outright. **The authoring group may begin drafting the position paper only after the BOD has approved the intent form.**

Approved *Position Briefs* are submitted to the [Journal of Adolescent Health](#) for publication.

Position Paper Development

Step #6: Position Paper Development

Author groups will have four months to submit a draft position paper. Extension requests must be submitted before the deadline. Failure to communicate may result in expiration of intent.

Position papers are limited to 2,500 words, measured from the *statement of the problem* through the *summary*. The word count does not include the abstract, the initial listing of positions, or references. Position papers should include no more than 35 references. Requests to exceed the standard word count or reference limit may be submitted for consideration.

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.

[Download Position Paper Structure Guidelines](#)

Completed Paper Review & Approval Process

Step #7: PEB Final Review

Upon receipt of the draft position paper, the assigned PEB liaison and the Director of Publications will conduct an initial review before distributing the document to all members of the PEB. Authors will be required to either implement the feedback received or provide a

written rationale for any recommendations they choose not to incorporate. If substantive revisions result in positions that deviate from the BOD-approved intent, the paper will be returned to the authors, and a new Position Paper Intent will be required.

Step #8: SAHM Executive Committee Confirmation

Following PEB approval, the paper will be submitted to the SAHM Executive Committee (EC) to confirm alignment with the previously approved BOD intent. Once confirmed, the paper will be submitted to the [*Journal of Adolescent Health*](#) for publication.

In extraordinary circumstances, the EC reserves the authority to pause publication and elevate the matter to the BOD for further discussion before any additional action is taken.

Additional Dissemination Strategy Options

Upon final approval, position papers and position briefs are published in the *Journal of Adolescent Health*, posted on the Society's website, and indexed in Index Medicus as SAHM-authored works, with individual authors listed.

Pre-Publication Use

Following BOD approval of the Intent, SAHM staff – with leadership concurrence, may authorize use of approved positions for advocacy and educational purposes. This also applies to an approved position brief prior to publication.

Post-Publication Communication

After the Position Paper or Position Brief is published, SAHM staff and the author group will collaborate to develop an official announcement for the membership. In select cases, a press release may be issued for broader public distribution.

Additional Dissemination Opportunities

To further amplify reach and engagement, the author group may choose to participate in the following optional activities, based on interest and relevance:

- Host a SAHM-sponsored webinar or virtual discussion
- Seek endorsement from other professional organizations
- Present at the SAHM Annual Meeting or other relevant professional organization meetings
- Develop educational or outreach materials for adolescents, young adults, and their parents/supporters