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ETHICS

The aim of ethics is to render scientific—i.e., true, and as far as possible systematic—the apparent cognitions that most men have of rightness or reasonableness of conduct, whether the conduct be considered as right in itself, or as the means to some end conceived as ultimately reasonable.

— HENRY SIDGWICK

I would rather be the man who bought the Brooklyn Bridge than the man who sold it.

— WILL ROGERS

Trust. Lawyers make their living eliminating the need for it. They try to define relationships precisely. In the process, they often transform the dynamic, flexible, and friendly into the sterile, rigid, and adversarial. This may be necessary to minimize fraud and misunderstanding, but most human endeavors are still based on a handshake, on looking each other in the eye, and establishing a basis in trust. Unfortunately, we have arrived at a point in the history of medicine when trust is not enough. Today we are required to codify conduct that should be second nature to physicians and scientists. For journals, this has brought about rapid changes, especially in the guidelines which authors are asked to consider as manuscripts are prepared for publication.

These guidelines largely formalize behavior that was previously based on good sense and trust. A review of the field suggests that concerns have been raised in four general areas: authorship, conflict of interest, certification of protocol review by oversight committees, and originality of work. To document that authors are aware of these guidelines, the cover letter accompanying the manuscript is frequently required to contain statements attesting to the authors' agreement with these precepts.

The time has come for *The Journal of Nuclear Medicine* to participate in this process. We will now ask all authors to sign a statement in the letter accompanying a manuscript to indicate*:

1. They agree with the methods, results, and conclusions of the manuscript.
2. Major sources of support for the research have been acknowledged and situations that could result in conflicts of interest have been identified.
3. The work was performed in keeping with the ethical guidelines of the institution.
4. The work is original, has not been previously published, nor is under consideration for publication in another journal while under review.

We can never return to the old approaches of total trust. The lawyers have found us. We need to be sure to keep our house in order to avoid further incursions on our right to publish, lest we perish in a sea of red tape.

H. William Strauss
Editor, *The Journal of Nuclear Medicine*

*An explanation of each of these items is contained on page 906 of this issue.