The American Society of Hypertension (ASH, or the Society) is the largest organization in the United States dedicated to the dissemination of information concerning the pathophysiology, prevention, diagnosis, and treatment of hypertension. ASH is composed of individual members with varying interests and expertise and represents a “brain trust” for the field of hypertension.

For more than 20 years, ASH has confined its educational activities to an annual scientific meeting, chapter annual meetings, and rotating educational symposia. In the past 2 years, ASH has expanded its educational mission through partnering with The Journal of Clinical Hypertension (JCH) and the Journal of the American Society of Hypertension (JASH).

As the “voice of hypertension,” however, ASH will preserve its tradition of utilizing the vast talent contained within the membership to continue fulfilling its mission. In 2005, a writing group was convened to prepare a new definition of hypertension for the 2005 Annual Scientific Meeting subsequently published in JCH. While the outcome of this effort was not an official document of the Society, the presentation and publication were well received both here and abroad and has served as the platform for much discussion within the hypertension community.

The Society recognizes that hypertension guidelines are an urgent and critical undertaking to address practice needs of physicians and other health care professionals who treat hypertensive patients. Further, given its role and vision, one of the key, essential roles of the Society is to develop and maintain current hypertension guidelines for health care providers. To fulfill this important role, the Society will engage in the following activities:

- Partner with the National Heart Lung Blood Institute (NHLBI) in the revision and drafting of any proposed revised hypertension guidelines.
- Embark on the process of developing recommendations for hypertension specialists through a series of position papers. These papers will each cover a different topic that will be useful for physicians who treat patients with hypertension, including, but not limited to, physicians designated as hypertension specialists. Together, these papers will systematically cover many of the issues and topics that a traditional, single “guidelines” paper would not cover in depth (eg, hypertension classification, hemodynamic phenotypes, general treatment algorithms, resistant hypertension, hypertension urgencies, complicated hypertension cases, home monitoring vs ambulatory blood pressure monitoring, low-sodium diet, hypertension coding, and the economics of hypertension drugs).
- Each position paper will be approximately 4 pages in length. The goal is to publish a series of 12 position papers over the next 3 years.
- Each position paper will be subject to a vigorous internal and external review before publication as an official ASH position paper.
- Review by an external review committee consisting of 8 or 9 members appointed by the advisory committee for each position paper.
- Internal review by members of the writing group and advisory committee.
- Drs Henry R. Black, MD, Joseph L. Izzo, Jr, MD, Thomas D. Giles, MD, Barry J. Materson, MD, and Michael A. Weber, MD, will serve as members of the position paper advisory committee. This advisory committee will be responsible for the oversight and management of the entire program.

After review and approval by the authors of the respective writing group, the advisory committee and a final review by the ASH board of directors, each position paper will be published on the ASH Web site and in both of the Society journals as well as other hypertension and/or cardiovascular journals. The position papers may also be distributed to a wide audience through online options currently under review.

Thomas D. Giles, MD

REFERENCE