

Summary of Public Comments Received to Inform the NAM Project on “Principles for Defining & Verifying the Authority of Online Providers of Health Information”

Between April 5 and April 9, 2021, the National Academy of Medicine (NAM) solicited public comments on a [preliminary discussion document](#) to inform its project on [“Principles for Defining & Verifying the Authority of Online Providers of Health Information.”](#) The NAM received a total of 48 comments during this period. Five key themes emerged among these comments, which are summarized below.

Accounting for the Evolving Nature of Science and Knowledge

Several commenters noted that science and medical care inherently involve experimentation and iteration, and thus are constantly evolving. One commenter voiced concern that guidance from the NAM project may “limit the sharing of new or varied approaches to care.” Another referenced a “replication crisis” in scientific and medical research (referring to the difficulty of reproducing research findings) and

not be regarded as authoritative. Another voiced a need for organizations, even those that have been “previously otherwise accredited,” to disclose conflicts, while another wrote this is the “most important thing to consider. A related comment noted “unconscious bias in structures must be addressed.” A significant percentage of comments centered around this issue. One comment pointed out that

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