Statutory Accounting Principles (E) Working Group

**Maintenance Agenda Submission Form**

**Form A**

## **Issue:** Policy Statement Terminology Change – Substantive & Nonsubstantive

**Check (applicable entity):**

P/C Life Health

Modification of Existing SSAP

New Issue or SSAP

Interpretation

**Description of Issue:** Pursuant to the Aug. 14, 2021 referral from the Financial Condition (E) Committee, the discussion involving *SSAP No. 71—Policy Acquisition Costs and Commissions*, has highlighted that the statutory accounting terminology of “substantive” and “nonsubstantive” to describe statutory accounting revisions being considered by the Statutory Accounting Principles (E) Working Group to the *Accounting Practices and Procedures Manual* (AP&P Manual) could be misunderstood by users that are not familiar with the specific definitions and intended application of those terms. To avoid the incorrect perception that these terms may reflect the degree of financial impact to companies based on their common usage, the Financial Condition (E) Committee requests that the Statutory Accounting Principles consider updating these terms to prevent future misunderstandings.

Additional Referral Excerpts:

The Financial Condition (E) Committee understands the terms “substantive” and “nonsubstantive” were crafted as part of the statutory accounting principles (SAP) codification, which was finalized in 1998, and were intended to be simple, concise terms to differentiate whether proposed revisions reflect new SAP concepts (substantive) or clarification of existing SAP concepts (nonsubstantive). The source location for the definitions and classification criteria of these terms is the NAIC Policy Statement on Maintenance of Statutory Accounting Principles, but it is noted that the terms and definitions are referred to throughout SAP guidance, other policy statements, issue papers, and agenda items.

The Working Group should consider eliminating “substantive” and “nonsubstantive” and instead refer to the type of revisions in accordance with the general nature in which those terms were intended to reflect. As such a revision that would have previously been considered “substantive” could be referred to as a “New SAP Concept” and a revision that would have previously been considered as “nonsubstantive” could be referred to as a “SAP Clarification.” The Committee is not proposing that the Working Group reassess the classification criteria but is simply requesting terminology changes to prevent future misinterpretations or assessments by others. As such, unless the Working Group believes further revisions are necessary, statutory revisions that would have been previously classified as “nonsubstantive” are anticipated to continue to fall within that definition and be captured under the new terminology as a “SAP Clarification.”

The referral also includes proposed revisions to the *NAIC Policy Statement on Maintenance of Statutory Accounting Principles* as potential suggestions to incorporate the proposed guidance change. (These proposed edits are shown in the Aug. 26, 2021, proposed edits for exposure.)

Existing Authoritative Literature:

Although the terms “substantive” and “nonsubstantive” are used throughout the AP&P Manual, the source location for the definitions of these terms is the *NAIC Policy Statement on Maintenance of Statutory Accounting Principles*:

NAIC Policy Statement on

**Maintenance of Statutory Accounting Principles**

1. Statutory accounting principles (SAP) provide the basis for insurers to prepare financial statements to be filed with and utilized by state insurance departments for financial regulation purposes. Accuracy and completeness of such filings are critical to meaningful solvency monitoring. Accordingly, maintenance of SAP guidance for changes in the industry and changes in regulatory concerns is vital to preserving the usefulness of SAP financial statements.
2. The promulgation of new or revised SAP guidance by the NAIC ultimately requires action of the entire NAIC membership. Responsibility for proposing new or revised SAP guidance will be delegated through the NAIC committee structure to the Accounting Practices and Procedures (E) Task Force (Task Force). The Task Force will charge the Statutory Accounting Principles (E) Working Group (Working Group) with the exclusive responsibility to develop and propose new statements of statutory accounting principles (SSAPs), to revise existing SSAPs, and to issue interpretations.

**Composition of the Statutory Accounting Principles (E) Working Group**

1. The chair of the Task Force shall determine membership of the Working Group subject to approval by the Financial Condition (E) Committee. The Working Group shall be limited in size to no more than 15 members and will include representation from the four zones of the NAIC. Membership shall be vested in the state (until such time as the membership may be changed) but continuity of individuals, to the extent possible, is extremely desirable.

**Development of New or Substantively Revised SSAPs**

1. New SSAPs will be developed to address, but will not be limited to: 1) concepts not previously addressed by a SSAP and that do not fit within the scope of an existing SSAP; 2) concepts that fit within the scope of an existing SSAP, but the Working Group elects to supersede existing SSAPs and 3) existing concepts that warrant significant revisions. Substantively-revised SSAPs will be developed to address, but will not be limited to: 1) concepts that fit within the accounting topic of an existing SSAP, but have not been addressed by the Working Group; 2) changes to the valuation and/or measurement of an existing SSAP; and 3) modifications to the overall application of existing SSAPs. The decision to undertake development of a new or substantively revised SSAP will rest with the Working Group. New or substantively revised SSAPs will have a specified effective date.
2. Research and drafting of new or substantially revised SSAPs will be performed by NAIC staff under the direction and supervision of the Working Group which may enlist the assistance of interested parties and/or consultants with requisite technical expertise as needed or desired. The first step in developing new and substantively revised SSAPs will commonly be the drafting of an issue paper, which will contain a summary of the issue, a summary conclusion, discussion, and a relevant literature section. Public comments will be solicited on an issue paper (at least one exposure period), and at least one public hearing will be held before the issue paper is converted to a SSAP. Upon approval by the Working Group, all proposed SSAPs will be exposed for public comment for a period commensurate with the length of the draft and the complexities of the issue(s). After a hearing of comments, adoption of new or substantively revised SSAPs (including any amendments from exposure) may be made by simple majority. If no comments are received during the public comment period, the Working Group may adopt the proposal collectively (one motion/vote) with other non-contested positions after the opportunity is given during the hearing to separately discuss the proposal. All new and substantively revised SSAPs must be on the agenda for at least one public hearing before presentation to the Task Force for consideration. Adoption by the Task Force, its parent and the NAIC membership shall be governed by the NAIC bylaws.
3. The Working Group may, by a super majority vote (7 out of 10 members, 8 out of 11 or 12, 9 out of 13, 10 out of 14, and 11 out of 15) elect to: 1) combine the IP and SSAP process, resulting in concurrent exposure of the two documents; 2) expose and adopt revisions to a SSAP prior to the drafting/adoption of the related IP; and/or 3) forego completion of an IP and only proceed with revisions to a substantively revised SSAP.
4. If accounting guidance, reserving standards, asset valuation standards, or any other standards or rules affecting accounting practices and procedures are first developed by other NAIC working groups, task forces, subcommittees, or committees, such proposed guidance, standards or rules shall be presented to the Working Group for consideration. In cases where such guidance has already been subjected to substantial due process (e.g., public comment periods and/or public hearings), the Working Group may elect to shorten comment periods and/or eliminate public hearings, and in such cases, will notify the Task Force of these actions.

**Development of Nonsubstantive Revisions to SSAPs**

1. Nonsubstantive revisions to SAP will be developed to address, but will not be limited to: 1) clarification of the intent or application of existing SSAPs; 2) new disclosures and modification of existing disclosures; 3) revisions that do not change the intent of existing guidance; and 4) revisions to *Appendix A—Excerpts of NAIC Model Laws* to reflect amendments to NAIC adopted model laws and regulations. Research and drafting of nonsubstantive revisions will be performed by NAIC staff under the direction and supervision of the Working Group. Public comment will be solicited on nonsubstantive revisions, and the item will be included on the agenda for at least one public hearing before the Working Group adopts nonsubstantive revisions. Nonsubstantive revisions are considered effective immediately after adoption by the Working Group, unless the Working Group incorporates a specific effective date. If comments are not received during the public comment period, the Working Group may adopt the proposal collectively (one motion/vote) with other “non-contested” positions after opportunity is given during the hearing to separately discuss the proposal. At its discretion, the Working Group may request that an issue paper be drafted for nonsubstantive revisions in order to capture historical discussion and adopted revisions. Adoption of nonsubstantive revisions by the Task Force, its parent and the NAIC membership shall be governed by the NAIC bylaws.

**Development of Interpretations to SSAPs and Referencing Interpretations Within SSAPs**

Interpretations Which DO NOT Amend, Supersede or Conflict with Existing SSAPs

1. Interpretations may be developed to address issues requiring timely application or clarification of existing SAP, which shall not amend, supersede or conflict with effective SSAPs. Issues being considered as an interpretation must be discussed at no less than two open meetings. (Original introduction of the issue when the Working Group identifies the intent to address the issue as an “interpretation” during a public discussion is considered the first open meeting discussion.) The process must allow opportunity for interested parties to provide comments, but as interpretations are intended to provide timely responses to questions of application or interpretation and clarification of guidance, no minimum exposure timeframe is required.
2. As these interpretations do not amend, supersede or conflict with existing SSAP guidance, the interpretation is effective upon Working Group adoption unless specifically stated otherwise. The voting requirement to adopt an interpretation of this type is a simple majority. The Working Group shall report the adopted interpretation to the Accounting Practices and Procedures (E) Task Force as part of its public report during the next NAIC national meeting (or earlier if applicable). Interpretations can be overturned, amended or deferred by a two-thirds majority of the Task Force membership. For clarification, a two-thirds majority of the Task Force requires two-thirds of the entire Task Force membership, not just those electing to vote. Additionally, interpretations can be overturned, amended, deferred, or referred to either the Task Force and/or the Working Group by a simple majority of the Financial Condition (E) Committee.

Interpretations Which Amend, Supersede or Conflict with Existing SSAPs

1. In certain circumstances such as catastrophes and other time-sensitive issues requiring immediate, temporary statutory accounting guidance, the Working Group may adopt an interpretation which creates new SAP or conflicts with existing SSAPs. Historically, these interpretations temporarily modified statutory accounting principles and/or specific disclosures were developed in response to nationally significant events (e.g., Hurricane Sandy, September 11, 2001). (Examples of time-sensitive issues that have previously provided INT exceptions to SAP include the transition from LIBOR and special situations such as the federal TALF program.) Interpretations that conflict with existing SSAPs shall be temporary and restricted to circumstances arising from the need to issue guidance for circumstances requiring immediate guidance. In order to adopt an interpretation that creates new SAP or conflicts with existing SSAPs, the Working Group must have 67% of its members voting (10 out of 15 members) with a super majority (7 out of 10, 8 out of 11 or 12, 9 out of 13, 10 out of 14, or 11 out of 15) supporting adoption.
2. These interpretations are effective upon Working Group adoption, unless stated otherwise, and shall be reported to the Accounting Practices and Procedures (E) Task Force as part of its public report during the next NAIC national meeting (or earlier if applicable). In circumstances where the Working Group adopts an interpretation (which creates new SAP or conflicts with existing SSAPs) that is controversial in nature (i.e., due to regulator or industry feedback or could have a policy level impact), the Working Group may elect to postpone the effective date until the item has been discussed by the Task Force and the Financial Condition (E) Committee and both have had an opportunity to review the interpretation.
3. These interpretations can be overturned, amended or deferred by a two-thirds majority of the Task Force membership. For clarification, a two-thirds majority of the Task Force requires two-thirds of the entire Task Force membership, not just those electing to vote. Additionally, interpretations can be overturned, amended, deferred, or referred to either the Task Force and/or the Working Group by a simple majority of the Financial Condition (E) Committee.
4. As new SSAPs are developed, it is essential to review and, if necessary, update the status of interpretations related to SSAPs that are being replaced and/or new SSAPs being developed. The following options are available to the Working Group when a SSAP with existing interpretations is replaced:
5. **Interpretation of the new SSAP -** If the Working Group would like to maintain the interpretation, the new SSAP can be added to the list of statements interpreted by the interpretation. In addition, the status section of the new SSAP will list the interpretation number next to the heading “Interpreted by.”
6. **Nullification** - When an interpretation is nullified by a subsequent SSAP or superseded by another interpretation, the interpretation is deemed no longer technically helpful, is shaded and moved to Appendix H (Superseded SSAPs and Nullified Interpretations), and the reason for the change is noted beneath the interpretation title. The status section of the SSAP describes the impact of the new guidance and the effect on the interpretation (for example, nullifies, incorporated in the new SSAP with paragraph reference, etc.).
7. **Incorporation** - When an interpretation is incorporated into a new SSAP, the Working Group can choose from the following two options:

i. If the interpretation only interprets one SSAP, then the interpretation is listed as being nullified under the “affects” section of the SSAP and is not referenced under the “interpreted by” section of the status page of the SSAP.

ii. If the interpretation references additional SSAPs, and the Working Group intends to maintain the guidance, the interpretation is unchanged (no nullification). The new SSAP (Summary of Issue section) reflects that the interpretation issue has been incorporated into the new statement.

Activity to Date (issues previously addressed by the Working Group, Emerging Accounting Issues (E) Working Group, SEC, FASB, other State Departments of Insurance or other NAIC groups): None

**Information or issues (included in *Description of Issue*) not previously contemplated by the Working Group:**

None

**Convergence with International Financial Reporting Standards (IFRS):** N/A

Staff Recommendation:

NAIC staff recommends that the Working Group move this item to the active listing and expose revisions to the *NAIC Policy Statement on Maintenance of Statutory Accounting Principles,* as suggested by the Financial Condition (E) Committee in their Aug. 14, 2021, referral, to alter the terminology used when discussing types of statutory accounting revisions.

Due to the extent that these terms are currently used throughout the AP&P Manual, upon adoption of this terminology change, NAIC staff will utilize the new terminology on a go-forward basis. These updates will be limited to the guidance that describes the use of these terms and will not capture previously adopted SSAPs, issue papers or agenda items. The terms used in previously adopted guidance will remain, with the new terms being used prospectively when considering future revisions to statutory accounting.

Aug. 26, 2021 - Proposed Revisions from Aug. 14, 2021, Financial Condition (E) Committee Referral:

**NAIC Policy Statement on Maintenance of Statutory Accounting Principles**

1. Statutory accounting principles (SAP) provide the basis for insurers to prepare financial statements to be filed with and utilized by state insurance departments for financial regulation purposes. Accuracy and completeness of such filings are critical to meaningful solvency monitoring. Accordingly, maintenance of SAP guidance for changes in the industry and changes in regulatory concerns is vital to preserving the usefulness of SAP financial statements.
2. The promulgation of new or revised SAP guidance by the NAIC ultimately requires action of the entire NAIC membership. Responsibility for proposing new or revised SAP guidance will be delegated through the NAIC committee structure to the Accounting Practices and Procedures (E) Task Force (Task Force). The Task Force will charge the Statutory Accounting Principles (E) Working Group (Working Group) with the exclusive responsibility to develop and propose new statements of statutory accounting principles (SSAPs), to revise existing SSAPs, and to issue interpretations.

**Composition of the Statutory Accounting Principles (E) Working Group**

1. The chair of the Task Force shall determine membership of the Working Group subject to approval by the Financial Condition (E) Committee. The Working Group shall be limited in size to no more than 15 members and will include representation from the four zones of the NAIC. Membership shall be vested in the state (until such time as the membership may be changed) but continuity of individuals, to the extent possible, is extremely desirable.

**Development of New SSAPs or New SAP Concepts1 in an Existing SSAP**

1. New SSAPs will be developed to address, but will not be limited to: 1) concepts not previously addressed by a SSAP and that do not fit within the scope of an existing SSAP; 2) concepts that fit within the scope of an existing SSAP, but the Working Group elects to supersede existing SSAPs and 3) existing concepts that warrant significant revisions. New SAP concepts to existing SSAPs will be developed to address, but will not be limited to: 1) concepts that fit within the accounting topic of an existing SSAP, but have not been addressed by the Working Group; 2) changes to the valuation and/or measurement of an existing SSAP; and 3) modifications to the overall application of existing SSAPs. The decision to undertake development of a new SSAP or a new SAP concept in an existing SSAP will rest with the Working Group. New SSAPs or new SAP concept in an existing SSAP will have a specified effective date.
2. Research and drafting of new SSAP or a new SAP concept in an existing SSAP will be performed by NAIC staff under the direction and supervision of the Working Group which may enlist the assistance of interested parties and/or consultants with requisite technical expertise as needed or desired. The first step in developing new SSAPs and new SAP concepts in existing SSAPs will commonly be the drafting of an issue paper, which will contain a summary of the issue, a summary conclusion, discussion, and a relevant literature section. Public comments will be solicited on an issue paper (at least one exposure period), and at least one public hearing will be held before the issue paper is converted to a SSAP. Upon approval by the Working Group, all proposed SSAPs will be exposed for public comment for a period commensurate with the length of the draft and the complexities of the issue(s). After a hearing of comments, adoption of new SSAPs or new SAP concepts in existing SSAPs (including any amendments from exposure) may be made by simple majority. If no comments are received during the public comment period, the Working Group may adopt the proposal collectively (one motion/vote) with other non-contested positions after the opportunity is given during the hearing to separately discuss the proposal. All new SSAPs and new SAP concepts in existing SSAPs must be on the agenda for at least one public hearing before presentation to the Task Force for consideration. Adoption by the Task Force, its parent and the NAIC membership shall be governed by the NAIC bylaws.
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4. If accounting guidance, reserving standards, asset valuation standards, or any other standards or rules affecting accounting practices and procedures are first developed by other NAIC working groups, task forces, subcommittees, or committees, such proposed guidance, standards or rules shall be presented to the Working Group for consideration. In cases where such guidance has already been subjected to substantial due process (e.g., public comment periods and/or public hearings), the Working Group may elect to shorten comment periods and/or eliminate public hearings, and in such cases, will notify the Task Force of these actions.

**Development of SAP Clarifications1**

1. SAP clarifications will be developed to address, but will not be limited to: 1) clarification of the intent or application of existing SSAPs; 2) new disclosures and modification of existing disclosures; 3) revisions that do not change the intent of existing guidance; and 4) revisions to *Appendix A—Excerpts of NAIC Model Laws* to reflect amendments to NAIC adopted model laws and regulations. Research and drafting of SAP clarification revisions will be performed by NAIC staff under the direction and supervision of the Working Group. Public comment will be solicited on these revisions, and the item will be included on the agenda for at least one public hearing before the Working Group adopts revisions. SAP clarification revisions are considered effective immediately after adoption by the Working Group, unless the Working Group incorporates a specific effective date. If comments are not received during the public comment period, the Working Group may adopt the proposal collectively (one motion/vote) with other “non-contested” positions after opportunity is given during the hearing to separately discuss the proposal. At its discretion, the Working Group may request that an issue paper be drafted for SAP clarification revisions in order to capture historical discussion and adopted revisions. Adoption of these revisions by the Task Force, its parent and the NAIC membership shall be governed by the NAIC bylaws.

**New Footnote 1**: Prior to (adoption date), the term used to describe a new SAP concept was “substantive” and the term used to describe a SAP clarification was “nonsubstantive.” The new terms will be reflected in materials to describe revisions to statutory accounting principles on a prospective basis and historical documents will not be updated to reflect the revised terms.

**Development of Interpretations to SSAPs and Referencing Interpretations Within SSAPs**

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ii. If the interpretation references additional SSAPs, and the Working Group intends to maintain the guidance, the interpretation is unchanged (no nullification). The new SSAP (Summary of Issue section) reflects that the interpretation issue has been incorporated into the new statement.

Staff Review Completed by: Julie Gann, NAIC Staff – August 2021

Status:

On August 26, 2021, the Statutory Accounting Principles (E) Working Group moved this agenda item to the active listing, categorized as nonsubstantive, and exposed revisions to the *NAIC Policy Statement on Maintenance of Statutory Accounting Principles,* as illustrated above and suggested by the Financial Condition (E) Committee in their Aug. 14, 2021, referral, to alter the terminology used when discussing types of statutory accounting revisions.

https://naiconline.sharepoint.com/teams/FRSStatutoryAccounting/National Meetings/A. National Meeting Materials/2021/9. August 26/Exposures/21-14 - SAP Terminology.docx