

# Verdence Capital Advisors, LLC

## Brochure

**Dated: July 19, 2017**

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**This brochure provides information about the qualifications and business practices of Verdence Capital Advisors, LLC. If you have any questions about the contents of this brochure, please contact us at (410) 473-5380. The information in this brochure has not been approved or verified by the United States Securities and Exchange Commission or by any state securities authority.**

**Additional information about Verdence Capital Advisors, LLC also is available on the SEC's website at [www.adviserinfo.sec.gov](http://www.adviserinfo.sec.gov).**

**References herein to Verdence Capital Advisors, LLC as a “registered investment adviser” or any reference to being “registered” does not imply a certain level of skill or training.**

## **Item 2           Material Changes**

This is Verdenca Capital Advisors' initial Form ADV.

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#### **Item 4            Advisory Business**

- A. Verdenca Capital Advisors, LLC (the “Registrant”) is a limited liability company formed in July 2017 in the State of Delaware. The Registrant became registered as an Investment Adviser Firm in June 2017. The Registrant is principally owned by Leo J. Kelly III. Mr. Kelly is the Registrant’s Managing Member.

B.

##### **INVESTMENT ADVISORY SERVICES**

The client can determine to engage the Registrant to provide discretionary investment advisory services on a wrap or non-wrap *fee* basis. (*See* discussion below). If a client determines to engage the Registrant on a wrap fee basis the client will pay a single fee for bundled services (*i.e.*, investment advisory, brokerage, custody). The services included in a wrap fee agreement will depend upon each client’s particular need. If the client determines to engage the Registrant on a non-wrap fee basis the client will select individual services on an unbundled basis, paying for each service separately (*i.e.*, investment advisory, brokerage, custody).

Registrant's annual investment advisory fee shall include investment advisory services, and, to the extent specifically requested by the client, financial planning and consulting services. In the event that the client requires extraordinary planning and/or consultation services (to be determined in the sole discretion of the Registrant), the Registrant may determine to charge for such additional services, the dollar amount of which shall be set forth in a separate written notice to the client.

##### **NON-WRAP FEE BASIS**

The client can determine to engage the Registrant to provide discretionary investment advisory services on a non-wrap *fee* basis. The Registrant’s annual investment advisory fee is based upon a percentage (%) of the market value of the assets placed under the Registrant’s management, generally negotiable up to 1.30%.

##### **VERDENCA WRAP PROGRAM**

The Registrant may provide discretionary investment management services on a wrap fee basis in accordance with the Registrant’s investment management wrap fee program (the “Program”). The services offered under, and the corresponding terms and conditions pertaining to, the Program are discussed in the Wrap Fee Program Brochure, a copy of which is presented to all prospective Program participants. Under the Program, the Registrant is able to offer participants discretionary investment management services, for a single specified annual Program fee, inclusive of trade execution, custody, reporting, account maintenance, investment management fees, and in some instances, fees charged by independent managers and/or separately managed accounts. However, clients may be responsible for amounts including, but not limited to, trustee fees, mutual fund expenses, ETF expenses, fees for trades executed away from custodian, mark-ups, mark-downs, transfer taxes, fees charged by independent managers and/or separately managed accounts (when such managers require the client to enter into a dual contract relationship) odd lot differentials, exchange fees, interest charges, American Depository Receipt agency processing fees, and any charges, taxes or other fees mandated by any federal,

state or other applicable law or otherwise agreed to with regard to client accounts (such fees are in addition to any fees paid by the client to the Registrant and are between the client and the account custodian). The current annual Program fee ranges from negotiable up to 1.50%, depending upon the complexity of the account, the amount of the client assets in the Program and the independent/separately managed accounts utilized by the client's investment portfolio.

The terms and conditions for client participation in the Program are set forth in detail in the Wrap Fee Program Brochure, which is presented to all prospective Program participants in accordance with disclosure requirements. All prospective Program participants should read both the Brochure and the Wrap Fee Program Brochure, and ask any corresponding questions that they may have, prior to participation in the Program.

Please Note: As indicated in the Wrap Fee Program Brochure, participation in the Program may cost more or less than purchasing such services separately. When managing a client's account on a wrap fee basis, the Registrant shall receive as payment for its asset management services, the balance of the wrap fee after all other costs (including account transaction fees) incorporated into the wrap fee have been deducted. As also indicated in the Wrap Fee Program Brochure, the Program fee charged by the Registrant for participation in the Program may be higher or lower than those charged by other sponsors of comparable wrap fee programs.

Conflict of Interest: Because Program transaction fees and/or commissions are being paid by the Registrant to the account custodian/broker-dealer, the Registrant could have an economic incentive to maximize its compensation by seeking to minimize the number of trades in the client's Program account. The Registrant's Chief Compliance Officer remains available to address any questions that a client or prospective client may have regarding the corresponding conflict of interest a wrap fee arrangement may create.

#### **FINANCIAL PLANNING AND CONSULTING SERVICES (STAND-ALONE)**

The Registrant may be engaged to provide financial planning and/or consulting services (including investment and non-investment related matters, including estate planning, insurance planning, etc.) on a stand-alone separate fee basis. Registrant's planning and consulting fees are negotiable, but generally range from \$15,000-\$25,000 on a fixed fee basis, and from \$250-\$500 on an hourly rate basis, depending upon the level, complexity, and scope of the service(s) required and the professional(s) rendering the service(s). Prior to engaging the Registrant to provide planning or consulting services, clients are generally required to enter into a *Financial Planning and Consulting Agreement* with Registrant setting forth the terms and conditions of the engagement (including termination), describing the scope of the services to be provided, and the portion of the fee that is due from the client prior to Registrant commencing services. If requested by the client, Registrant may recommend the services of other professionals for implementation purposes, including certain of the Registrant's representatives in their individual capacities as registered representatives of Purshe Kaplan Sterling, an SEC registered and FINRA Member firm ("PKS"). (*See* disclosure below at Items 10.C below).

The client is under no obligation to engage the services of any such recommended professionals. The client retains absolute discretion over all such implementation decisions and is free to accept or reject any recommendation from the Registrant. **Please**

**Note:** If the client engages any such recommended professional, and a dispute arises thereafter relative to such engagement, the client agrees to seek recourse exclusively from and against the engaged professional. **Please Also Note:** It remains the client's responsibility to promptly notify the Registrant if there is ever any change in their financial situation or investment objectives for the purpose of reviewing, evaluating or revising Registrant's previous recommendations and/or services.

## MISCELLANEOUS

**Limitations of Financial Planning and Non-Investment Consulting/Implementation Services.** As indicated above, to the extent requested by the client, Registrant may provide financial planning and related consulting services regarding non-investment related matters, such as estate planning, tax planning, insurance, etc. Registrant does not serve as a law firm or accounting firm, and no portion of its services should be construed as legal or accounting services. Accordingly, Registrant does not prepare estate planning documents or tax returns. To the extent requested by a client, Registrant may recommend the services of other professionals for certain non-investment implementation purposes (i.e. attorneys, accountants, insurance agents, etc.), including representatives of Registrant in their separate individual capacities as representatives of PKS. Clients are under no obligation to engage the services of any such recommended professional. The client retains absolute discretion over all such decisions and is free to accept or reject any recommendation from Registrant and/or its representatives. **Please Note:** If the client engages any recommended professional, and a dispute arises thereafter relative to such engagement, the client agrees to seek recourse exclusively from and against the engaged professional.

**Please Also Note-Conflict of Interest:** The recommendation by Registrant's representative that a client purchase a securities commission product through Registrant's representative in their separate and individual capacity as a registered representative of PKS, presents a **conflict of interest**, as the receipt of commissions may provide an incentive to recommend investment products based on commissions to be received, rather than on a particular client's need. No client is under any obligation to purchase any securities commission products through such a representative. Clients are reminded that they may purchase securities products recommended by Registrant through other, non-affiliated broker-dealers. **Registrant's Chief Compliance Officer, Thomas New remains available to address any questions that a client or prospective client may have regarding the above conflict of interest.**

**Please Note: Cash Positions.** At any specific point in time, depending upon perceived or anticipated market conditions/events (there being no guarantee that such anticipated market conditions/events will occur), the Registrant maintains cash positions for defensive purposes. All cash positions (money markets, etc.) shall be included as part of assets under management for purposes of calculating the Registrant's advisory fee. When the account is holding cash positions, those cash positions will be subject to the same advisory fee as set forth in Item 5 below.

**Retirement Plan Rollovers – No Obligation / Potential for Conflict of Interest:** A client or prospective client leaving an employer typically has four options regarding an existing retirement plan (and may engage in a combination of these options): (i) leave the money in the former employer's plan, if permitted, (ii) roll over the assets to the new employer's plan, if one is available and rollovers are permitted, (iii) roll over to an

Individual Retirement Account (“IRA”), or (iv) cash out the account value (which could, depending upon the client’s age, result in adverse tax consequences). If the Registrant recommends that a client roll over their retirement plan assets into an account to be managed by the Registrant, such a recommendation creates a conflict of interest if the Registrant will earn an advisory fee on the rolled over assets. **No client is under any obligation to roll over retirement plan assets to an account managed by Registrant. The Registrant’s Chief Compliance Officer, Thomas New, remains available to address any questions that a client or prospective client may have regarding the potential for conflict of interest presented by such rollover recommendation.**

**Use of Mutual Funds.** While the Registrant may recommend allocating investment assets to mutual funds that are not available directly to the public, the Registrant may also recommend that clients allocate investment assets to publically-available mutual funds that the client could obtain without engaging Registrant as an investment advisor. However, if a client or prospective client determines to allocate investment assets to publically-available mutual funds without engaging Registrant as an investment adviser, the client or prospective client would not receive the benefit of Registrant’s initial and ongoing investment advisory services.

**Separately Managed Account Programs and Independent Managers.** The Registrant may allocate (and/or recommend that the client allocate) a portion of a client’s investment assets among unaffiliated Separately Managed Account Programs “SMAs” and/or independent investment managers in accordance with the client’s designated investment objective(s). In such situations, the SMAs or Independent Manager(s) shall have day-to-day responsibility for the active discretionary management of the allocated assets. The Registrant shall continue to render investment advisory services to the client relative to the ongoing monitoring and review of account performance, asset allocation and client investment objectives. Factors which the Registrant shall consider in recommending an SMA or Independent Manager(s) include the client’s designated investment objective(s), management style, performance, reputation, financial strength, reporting, pricing, and research. **The investment management fee charged by the Independent Manager(s) is separate from, and in addition to, Registrant’s advisory fee as set forth in Item 5.**

**Unaffiliated Private Investment Funds.** Registrant may provide investment advice regarding unaffiliated private investment funds. Registrant may also recommend that certain qualified clients consider an investment in unaffiliated private investment funds. Registrant’s role relative to the private investment funds shall be limited to its initial and ongoing due diligence and investment monitoring services. If a client determines to become a private fund investor, the amount of assets invested in the fund(s) shall be included as part of “assets under management” for purposes of Registrant calculating its investment advisory fee. Registrant’s clients are under absolutely no obligation to consider or make an investment in a private investment fund(s).

**Please Note:** Private investment funds generally involve various risk factors, including, but not limited to, potential for complete loss of principal, liquidity constraints and lack of transparency, a complete discussion of which is set forth in each fund’s offering documents, which will be provided to each client for review and consideration. Unlike liquid investments that a client may own, private investment funds do not provide daily liquidity or pricing. Each prospective client investor will be required to complete a Subscription Agreement, pursuant to which the client shall establish that he/she is

qualified for investment in the fund, and acknowledges and accepts the various risk factors that are associated with such an investment.

**Please Also Note:** Valuation. In the event that Registrant references private investment funds owned by the client on any supplemental account reports prepared by Registrant, the value(s) for all private investment funds owned by the client shall reflect the most recent valuation provided by the fund sponsor. If no subsequent valuation post-purchase is provided by the Fund Sponsor, then the valuation shall reflect the initial purchase price (and/or a value as of a previous date), or the current value(s) (either the initial purchase price and/or the most recent valuation provided by the fund sponsor). The valuation could reflect the initial purchase price (and/or a value as of a previous date) but the actual current value(s) (to the extent ascertainable) could be significantly more or less than the valuation reflected. The client's advisory fee shall be based upon reflected fund value(s).

**Client Obligations.** In performing its services, Registrant shall not be required to verify any information received from the client or from the client's other professionals, and is expressly authorized to rely thereon. Moreover, each client is advised that it remains their responsibility to promptly notify the Registrant if there is ever any change in their financial situation or investment objectives for the purpose of reviewing, evaluating or revising Registrant's previous recommendations and/or services.

**Disclosure Statement.** A copy of the Registrant's written Brochure as set forth on Part 2A of Form ADV shall be provided to each client prior to, or contemporaneously with, the execution of the *Investment Advisory Agreement* or *Financial Planning and Consulting Agreement*.

- C. The Registrant shall provide investment advisory services specific to the needs of each client. Prior to providing investment advisory services, an investment adviser representative will ascertain each client's investment objective(s). Thereafter, the Registrant shall allocate and/or recommend that the client allocate investment assets consistent with the designated investment objective(s). The client may, at any time, impose reasonable restrictions, in writing, on the Registrant's services.
- D. There is no significant difference between how the Registrant manages wrap fee accounts and non-wrap fee accounts. However, as stated above, if a client determines to engage the Registrant on a wrap fee basis the client will pay a single fee for bundled services (*i.e.*, investment advisory, brokerage, custody) (*See* Item 4.B). The services included in a wrap fee agreement will depend upon each client's particular need. If the client determines to engage the Registrant on a non-wrap fee basis the client will select individual services on an unbundled basis, paying for each service separately (*i.e.*, investment advisory, brokerage, custody). **Please Note:** When managing a client's account on a wrap fee basis, the Registrant shall receive as payment for its investment advisory services, the balance of the wrap fee after all other costs incorporated into the wrap fee have been deducted.
- E. As of June 26, 2017, the Registrant had \$0 in assets under management on a discretionary basis.

## Item 5 Fees and Compensation

A.

### NON-WRAP FEE BASIS

The Registrant's annual investment advisory fee for discretionary investment advisory services provided on a non-wrap *fee* basis shall vary from negotiable up to 1.30% of the total assets placed under the Registrant's management/advisement and shall be based upon various objective and subjective factors. These factors include, but are not limited to, the amount of the assets placed under the Registrant's management, the level and scope of the overall investment advisory services to be rendered and the complexity of the engagement.

### VERDENCE WRAP PROGRAM

The Program offers participants discretionary investment management services, for a single specified annual Program fee, inclusive of trade execution, custody, reporting, account maintenance, investment management fees, and in some instances, fees charged by independent managers and/or separately managed accounts. The current annual Program fee ranges from negotiable up to 1.50%, depending upon the complexity of the account, the amount of the client assets in the Program and the independent/separately managed accounts utilized by the client's investment portfolio.

**Fee Differentials.** As indicated above, Registrant shall receive an investment advisory fee based upon a percentage (%) of the market value of the assets placed under management generally negotiable up to 1.30%. However, non-wrap and wrap program fees shall vary depending upon various objective and subjective factors, including but not limited to: the representative assigned to the account, the amount of assets to be invested, the complexity of the engagement, the anticipated number of meetings and servicing needs, related accounts, future earning capacity, anticipated future additional assets, and negotiations with the client. As a result, similar clients could pay different fees, which will correspondingly impact a client's net account performance. Moreover, the services to be provided by the Registrant to any particular client could be available from other advisers at lower fees. All clients and prospective clients should be guided accordingly.

### FINANCIAL PLANNING AND CONSULTING SERVICES (STAND-ALONE)

The Registrant provides financial planning and consulting services (including investment and non-investment related matters, including estate planning, insurance planning, etc.) on a stand-alone fee basis. Registrant's planning and consulting fees are negotiable, but generally range from \$15,000 to \$25,000 on a fixed fee basis, and from \$250 to \$500 on an hourly rate basis, depending upon the level and scope of the service(s) required and the professional(s) rendering the service(s).

- B. Clients may elect to have the Registrant's advisory fees deducted from their custodial account. Both Registrant's *Investment Advisory Agreement* and the custodial/clearing agreement may authorize the custodian to debit the account for the amount of the Registrant's investment advisory fee and to directly remit that management fee to the Registrant in compliance with regulatory procedures. In the limited event that the Registrant bills the client directly, payment is due upon receipt of the Registrant's invoice.



- C. As discussed below, unless the client directs otherwise or an individual client's circumstances require, the Registrant shall generally recommend that Charles Schwab & Co. Inc. ("*Schwab*") or Fidelity Investments ("*Fidelity*"), (collectively, the "*Custodians*") serve as the broker-dealer/custodian for client investment management assets. Broker-dealers such as the *Custodians*, which are unaffiliated with Registrant, charge brokerage commissions and/or transaction fees for effecting certain securities transactions (i.e. transaction fees are charged for certain no-load mutual funds, commissions are charged for individual equity and fixed income securities transactions). In addition to Registrant's investment management fee, brokerage commissions and/or transaction fees, clients will also incur, relative to all mutual fund and exchange traded fund purchases, charges imposed at the fund level (e.g. management fees and other fund expenses).

**Please Note:** Clients who engage the Registrant on a wrap fee basis **will not** incur brokerage commissions and/or transaction or asset based custodial fees in addition to the Program fee.

**Asset Based Pricing Limitations:** Certain clients may enter into an asset based pricing agreement with their account custodian. Under an asset based pricing arrangement, the amount paid to the custodian for account fees is based upon a percentage (%) of the market value of the account (generally, the greater the market value, the lower the %). This differs from transaction-based pricing, which assesses a separate commission/transaction fee for each account transaction. Account investment decisions are driven by security selection and anticipated market conditions and not the amount of transaction fees payable to the account custodian. The Registrant believes certain clients may benefit from an asset based pricing arrangement.

- D. Registrant's annual investment advisory fee shall be prorated and paid quarterly, in advance, based upon the market value of the assets on the last business day of the previous quarter.

The *Investment Advisory Agreement* between the Registrant and the client will continue in effect until terminated by either party by written notice in accordance with the terms of the *Investment Advisory Agreement*. Upon termination, the Registrant shall refund the pro-rated portion of the advanced advisory fee paid based upon the number of days remaining in the billing quarter.

- E. **Securities Commission Transactions.** In the event that the client desires, the client can engage Registrant's representatives, in their individual capacities, as registered representatives of Purshe Kaplan Sterling ("*PKS*"), an SEC registered and FINRA member broker-dealer, to implement investment recommendations on a commission basis. In the event the client chooses to purchase investment products through PKS, PKS will charge brokerage commissions to effect securities transactions, a portion of which commissions PKS shall pay to Registrant's representatives, as applicable. The brokerage commissions charged by PKS may be higher or lower than those charged by other broker-dealers. In addition, PKS, as well as Registrant's Representatives, relative to commission mutual fund purchases, may also receive additional ongoing 12b-1 trailing commission compensation directly from the mutual fund company during the period that the client maintains the mutual fund investment.

1. **Conflict of Interest:** The recommendation that a client purchase a commission product from PKS presents a conflict of interest, as the receipt of commissions may provide an incentive to recommend investment products based on commissions to be received, rather than on a particular client's need. No client is under any obligation to purchase any commission products from Registrant's representatives. **The Registrant's Chief Compliance Officer, Thomas New, remains available to address any questions that a client or prospective client may have regarding the above conflict of interest.**
2. **Please Note:** Clients may purchase investment products recommended by Registrant through other, non-affiliated broker dealers or agents.
3. The Registrant does not receive more than 50% of its revenue from advisory clients as a result of commissions or other compensation for the sale of investment products the Registrant recommends to its clients.
4. When Registrant's representatives sell an investment product on a commission basis, the Registrant does not charge an advisory fee in addition to the commissions paid by the client for such product. When providing services on an advisory fee basis, the Registrant's representatives do not also receive commission compensation for such advisory services. **However,** a client may engage the Registrant to provide investment management services on an advisory fee basis and separate from such advisory services purchase an investment product from Registrant's representatives on a separate commission basis.

## **Item 6            Performance-Based Fees and Side-by-Side Management**

Neither the Registrant nor any supervised person of the Registrant accepts performance-based fees.

## **Item 7            Types of Clients**

The Registrant's clients shall generally include individuals, business entities, pension and profit sharing plans, trusts, estates and charitable organizations. The Registrant generally requires a minimum annual fee of \$10,000. The Registrant, in its sole discretion, reduce or waive its minimum annual fee requirement and/or charge a lesser investment management fee based upon certain criteria (i.e. anticipated future earning capacity, anticipated future additional assets, dollar amount of assets to be managed, related accounts, account composition, negotiations with client, etc.).

## Item 8            **Methods of Analysis, Investment Strategies and Risk of Loss**

- A. The Registrant may utilize the following methods of security analysis:
- Fundamental - (analysis performed on historical and present data, with the goal of making financial forecasts)
  - Technical – (analysis performed on historical and present data, focusing on price and trade volume, to forecast the direction of prices)
  - Cyclical – (analysis performed on historical relationships between price and market trends, to forecast the direction of prices)

The Registrant may utilize the following investment strategies when implementing investment advice given to clients:

- Long Term Purchases (securities held at least a year)
- Short Term Purchases (securities sold within a year)

**Please Note: Investment Risk.** Different types of investments involve varying degrees of risk, and it should not be assumed that future performance of any specific investment or investment strategy (including the investments and/or investment strategies recommended or undertaken by the Registrant) will be profitable or equal any specific performance level(s). Investing in securities involves risk of loss that clients should be prepared to bear.

- B. The Registrant's method of analysis and investment strategy does not present any significant or unusual risks.

However, every method of analysis has its own inherent risks. To perform an accurate market analysis, the Registrant must have access to current/new market information. The Registrant has no control over the dissemination rate of market information; therefore, unbeknownst to the Registrant, certain analyses may be compiled with outdated market information, severely limiting the value of the Registrant's analysis. Furthermore, an accurate market analysis can only produce a forecast of the direction of market values. There can be no assurances that a forecasted change in market value will materialize into actionable and/or profitable investment opportunities.

The Registrant's primary investment strategies - Long Term Purchases and Short Term Purchases - are fundamental investment strategies. However, every investment strategy has its own inherent risks and limitations. For example, longer term investment strategies require a longer investment time period to allow for the strategy to potentially develop. Shorter term investment strategies require a shorter investment time period to potentially develop but, as a result of more frequent trading, may incur higher transactional costs when compared to a longer term investment strategy.

- C. Currently, the Registrant primarily allocates client investment assets among various mutual funds, individual equities (stocks) and debt instruments (bonds) on a discretionary basis in accordance with the client's designated investment objective(s).

## Item 9            Disciplinary Information

Neither the Registrant nor any of its supervised persons have been the subject of a disciplinary action.

## Item 10           Other Financial Industry Activities and Affiliations

- A. **Registered Representative of PKS.** As disclosed above in Item 5.E, certain of Registrant's representatives are also registered representatives of PKS, an SEC registered and FINRA member broker-dealer.
- B. Neither the Registrant, nor its representatives, are registered or have an application pending to register, as a futures commission merchant, commodity pool operator, a commodity trading advisor, or a representative of the foregoing.
- C. **Registered Representatives of a Broker Dealer.** As disclosed above in Item 5.E, certain of Registrant's representatives are registered representatives of PKS. Clients can choose to engage Registrant's representatives, in their individual capacities, to effect securities brokerage transactions on a commission basis.

**Conflict of Interest:** The recommendation by Registrant's representatives, that a client purchase a securities commission product presents a conflict of interest, as the receipt of commissions may provide an incentive to recommend investment products based on commissions received, rather than on a particular client's need. No client is under any obligation to purchase any investment products from Registrant's representatives. Clients are reminded that they may purchase securities products recommended by Registrant through other, non-affiliated registered representatives. **The Registrant's Chief Compliance Officer, Thomas New, remains available to address any questions that a client or prospective client may have regarding the above conflicts of interest.**

- D. The Registrant does not recommend or select other investment advisors for its clients for which it receives a fee.

## Item 11           Code of Ethics, Participation or Interest in Client Transactions and Personal Trading

- A. The Registrant maintains an investment policy relative to personal securities transactions. This investment policy is part of Registrant's overall Code of Ethics, which serves to establish a standard of business conduct for all of Registrant's Representatives that is based upon fundamental principles of openness, integrity, honesty and trust, a copy of which is available upon request.

In accordance with Section 204A of the Investment Advisers Act of 1940, the Registrant also maintains and enforces written policies reasonably designed to prevent the misuse of material non-public information by the Registrant or any person associated with the Registrant.

- B. Neither the Registrant nor any related person of Registrant recommends, buys, or sells for client accounts, securities in which the Registrant or any related person of Registrant has

a material financial interest.

- C. The Registrant and/or representatives of the Registrant *may* buy or sell securities that are also recommended to clients. This practice may create a situation where the Registrant and/or representatives of the Registrant are in a position to materially benefit from the sale or purchase of those securities. Therefore, this situation creates a potential conflict of interest. Practices such as “scalping” (*i.e.*, a practice whereby the owner of shares of a security recommends that security for investment and then immediately sells it at a profit upon the rise in the market price which follows the recommendation) could take place if the Registrant did not have adequate policies in place to detect such activities. In addition, this requirement can help detect insider trading, “front-running” (*i.e.*, personal trades executed prior to those of the Registrant’s clients) and other potentially abusive practices.

The Registrant has a personal securities transaction policy in place to monitor the personal securities transactions and securities holdings of each of the Registrant’s “Access Persons.” The Registrant’s securities transaction policy requires that Access Person of the Registrant must provide the Chief Compliance Officer or his/her designee with a written report of their current securities holdings within ten (10) days after becoming an Access Person. Additionally, each Access Person must provide the Chief Compliance Officer or his/her designee with a written report of the Access Person’s current securities holdings at least once each twelve (12) month period thereafter on a date the Registrant selects; provided, however that at any time that the Registrant has only one Access Person, he or she shall not be required to submit any securities report described above.

- D. The Registrant and/or representatives of the Registrant *may* buy or sell securities, at or around the same time as those securities are recommended to clients. This practice creates a situation where the Registrant and/or representatives of the Registrant are in a position to materially benefit from the sale or purchase of those securities. Therefore, this situation creates a potential conflict of interest. As indicated above in Item 11.C, the Registrant has a personal securities transaction policy in place to monitor the personal securities transaction and securities holdings of each of Registrant’s Access Persons.

## **Item 12      Brokerage Practices**

- A. In the event that the client requests that the Registrant recommend a broker-dealer/custodian for execution and/or custodial services (exclusive of those clients that may direct the Registrant to use a specific broker-dealer/custodian), Registrant generally recommends that investment management accounts be maintained at *Schwab* and/or *Fidelity*. Prior to engaging Registrant to provide investment management services, the client will be required to enter into a formal *Investment Advisory Agreement* with Registrant setting forth the terms and conditions under which Registrant shall manage the client's assets, and a separate custodial/clearing agreement with each designated broker-dealer/ custodian.

Factors that the Registrant considers in recommending *Schwab* and/or *Fidelity* (or any other broker-dealer/custodian to clients) include historical relationship with the Registrant, financial strength, reputation, execution capabilities, pricing, research, and service. Although the commissions and/or transaction fees paid by Registrant's clients shall comply with the Registrant's duty to obtain best execution, a client may pay a

commission that is higher than another qualified broker-dealer might charge to effect the same transaction where the Registrant determines, in good faith, that the commission/transaction fee is reasonable. In seeking best execution, the determinative factor is not the lowest possible cost, but whether the transaction represents the best qualitative execution, taking into consideration the full range of broker-dealer services, including the value of research provided, execution capability, commission rates, and responsiveness. Accordingly, although Registrant will seek competitive rates, it may not necessarily obtain the lowest possible commission rates for client account transactions. The brokerage commissions or transaction fees charged by the designated broker-dealer/custodian are exclusive of, and in addition to, Registrant's investment management fee. The Registrant's best execution responsibility is qualified if securities that it purchases for client accounts are mutual funds that trade at net asset value as determined at the daily market close.

1. Research and Additional Benefits

Although not a material consideration when determining whether to recommend that a client utilize the services of a particular broker-dealer/custodian, Registrant may receive from *Schwab* and/or *Fidelity* (or another broker-dealer/custodian, investment platform and/or mutual fund sponsor) without cost (and/or at a discount) support services and/or products, certain of which assist the Registrant to better monitor and service client accounts maintained at such institutions. Included within the support services that may be obtained by the Registrant may be investment-related research, pricing information and market data, software and other technology that provide access to client account data, compliance and/or practice management-related publications, discounted or gratis consulting services, discounted and/or gratis attendance at conferences, meetings, and other educational and/or social events, marketing support, computer hardware and/or software and/or other products used by Registrant in furtherance of its investment advisory business operations.

As indicated above, certain of the support services and/or products that *may* be received may assist the Registrant in managing and administering client accounts. Others do not directly provide such assistance, but rather assist the Registrant to manage and further develop its business enterprise.

Registrant's clients do not pay more for investment transactions effected and/or assets maintained at *Schwab* and/or *Fidelity* as a result of these arrangements. There is no corresponding commitment made by the Registrant to *Schwab* and/or *Fidelity* or any other entity to invest any specific amount or percentage of client assets in any specific mutual funds, securities or other investment products as a result of the above arrangement.

**The Registrant's Chief Compliance Officer, Thomas New, remains available to address any questions that a client or prospective client may have regarding the above arrangement and any corresponding perceived conflict of interest such arrangement may create.**

2. The Registrant does not receive referrals from broker-dealers.
3. The Registrant does not generally accept directed brokerage arrangements (when a client requires that account transactions be effected through a specific broker-dealer). In such client directed arrangements, the client will negotiate terms and arrangements

for their account with that broker-dealer, and Registrant will not seek better execution services or prices from other broker-dealers or be able to "batch" the client's transactions for execution through other broker-dealers with orders for other accounts managed by Registrant. As a result, client may pay higher commissions or other transaction costs or greater spreads, or receive less favorable net prices, on transactions for the account than would otherwise be the case.

**Please Note:** In the event that the client directs Registrant to effect securities transactions for the client's accounts through a specific broker-dealer, the client correspondingly acknowledges that such direction may cause the accounts to incur higher commissions or transaction costs than the accounts would otherwise incur had the client determined to effect account transactions through alternative clearing arrangements that may be available through Registrant.

**The Registrant's Chief Compliance Officer, Thomas New, remains available to address any questions that a client or prospective client may have regarding the above arrangement.**

- B. To the extent that the Registrant provides investment management services to its clients, the transactions for each client account generally will be effected independently, unless the Registrant decides to purchase or sell the same securities for several clients at approximately the same time. The Registrant may (but is not obligated to) combine or "bunch" such orders to obtain best execution, to negotiate more favorable commission rates or to allocate equitably among the Registrant's clients differences in prices and commissions or other transaction costs that might have been obtained had such orders been placed independently. Under this procedure, transactions will be averaged as to price and will be allocated among clients in proportion to the purchase and sale orders placed for each client account on any given day. The Registrant shall not receive any additional compensation or remuneration as a result of such aggregation.

### **Item 13      Review of Accounts**

- A. For those clients to whom Registrant provides investment supervisory services, account reviews are conducted on a periodic basis by the Registrant's investment advisor representatives, at least annually. All investment supervisory clients are advised that it remains their responsibility to advise the Registrant of any changes in their investment objectives and/or financial situation. All clients (in person or via telephone) are encouraged to review financial planning issues (to the extent applicable), investment objectives and account performance with the Registrant on an annual basis.
- B. The Registrant may conduct account reviews on an other than periodic basis upon the occurrence of a triggering event, such as a change in client investment objectives and/or financial situation, market corrections and client request.
- C. Clients are provided, at least quarterly, with written transaction confirmation notices and regular written summary account statements directly from the broker-dealer/custodian and/or program sponsor for the client accounts. The Registrant may also provide a written periodic report summarizing account activity and performance.

## Item 14      Client Referrals and Other Compensation

- A. As referenced in Item 12.A.1 above, the Registrant may receive an indirect economic benefit from the *Custodians*. The Registrant, without cost (and/or at a discount), may receive support services and/or products from the *Custodians*.

Registrant's clients do not pay more for investment transactions effected and/or assets maintained at the *Custodians* as a result of this arrangement. There is no corresponding commitment made by the Registrant to the *Custodians* or any other entity to invest any specific amount or percentage of client assets in any specific mutual funds, securities or other investment products as a result of the above arrangement.

**The Registrant's Chief Compliance Officer, Thomas New, remains available to address any questions that a client or prospective client may have regarding the above arrangement and any corresponding perceived conflict of interest any such arrangement may create.**

- B. If a client is introduced to the Registrant by either an unaffiliated or an affiliated solicitor, Registrant *may* pay that solicitor a referral fee in accordance with the requirements of Rule 206(4)-3 of the Investment Advisers Act of 1940, and any corresponding state securities law requirements. Any such referral fee shall be paid solely from the Registrant's investment management fee, and shall not result in any additional charge to the client. If the client is introduced to the Registrant by an unaffiliated solicitor, the solicitor, at the time of the solicitation, shall disclose the nature of his/her/its solicitor relationship, and shall provide each prospective client with a copy of the Registrant's written Brochure with a copy of the written disclosure statement from the solicitor to the client disclosing the terms of the solicitation arrangement between the Registrant and the solicitor, including the compensation to be received by the solicitor from the Registrant.

## Item 15      Custody

The Registrant shall have the ability to have its advisory fee for each client debited by the custodian on a quarterly basis. Clients are provided, at least quarterly, with written transaction confirmation notices and regular written summary account statements directly from the broker-dealer/custodian and/or program sponsor for the client accounts. The Registrant may also provide a written periodic report summarizing account activity and performance.

**Please Note:** To the extent that the Registrant provides clients with periodic account statements or reports, the client is urged to compare any statement or report provided by the Registrant with the account statements received from the account custodian. **Please Also Note:** The account custodian does not verify the accuracy of the Registrant's advisory fee calculation.

## Item 16      Investment Discretion

The client can determine to engage the Registrant to provide investment advisory services on a discretionary basis. Prior to the Registrant assuming discretionary authority over a client's account, client shall be required to execute an *Investment Advisory Agreement*,



naming the Registrant as client's attorney and agent in fact, granting the Registrant full authority to buy, sell, or otherwise effect investment transactions involving the assets in the client's name found in the discretionary account.

Clients who engage the Registrant on a discretionary basis may, at any time, impose restrictions, in writing, on the Registrant's discretionary authority (*i.e.*, limit the types/amounts of particular securities purchased for their account, exclude the ability to purchase securities with an inverse relationship to the market, limit or proscribe the Registrant's use of margin, etc.).

## **Item 17      Voting Client Securities**

Unless the client directs otherwise in writing, the Registrant is responsible for voting client proxies (however, the client shall maintain exclusive responsibility for all legal proceedings or other type events pertaining to the account assets, including, but not limited to, class action lawsuits). The Registrant shall vote proxies in accordance with its Proxy Voting Policy, a copy of which is available upon request. The Registrant shall monitor corporate actions of individual issuers and investment companies consistent with the Registrant's fiduciary duty to vote proxies in the best interests of its clients. Although the factors that Registrant will consider when determining how it will vote differ on a case by case basis, they may include, but are not limited to, the following: a review of recommendations from issuer management, shareholder proposals, cost effects of such proposals, effect on employees and executive and director compensation. With respect to individual issuers, the Registrant may be solicited to vote on matters including corporate governance, adoption or amendments to compensation plans (including stock options), and matters involving social issues and corporate responsibility. With respect to investment companies (*e.g.*, mutual funds), the Registrant may be solicited to vote on matters including the approval of advisory contracts, distribution plans, and mergers. The Registrant shall maintain records pertaining to proxy voting as required pursuant to Rule 204-2 (c)(2) under the Advisers Act. Copies of Rules 206(4)-6 and 204-2(c)(2) are available upon written request. In addition, information pertaining to how the Registrant voted on any specific proxy issue is also available upon written request. Requests should be made by contacting the Registrant's Chief Compliance Officer.

## **Item 18      Financial Information**

- A. The Registrant does not solicit fees of more than \$1,200, per client, six months or more in advance.
- B. The Registrant is unaware of any financial condition that is reasonably likely to impair its ability to meet its contractual commitments relating to its discretionary authority over certain client accounts.
- C. The Registrant has not been the subject of a bankruptcy petition.

**ANY QUESTIONS: The Registrant's Chief Compliance Officer, Thomas New, remains available to address any questions that a client or prospective client may have regarding the above disclosures and arrangements.**