

Writing Resolutions

Writing and submitting resolutions to the House of Delegates is one of the most effective ways an individual member can influence the policies and activities of CMA. Depending on the action called for, a resolution can even result in a major public policy initiative or change (for example, a resolution directing CMA to sponsor legislation). Any CMA member may author a resolution, but a delegate, alternate delegate, component medical society or delegation must submit the resolution. Members who are not delegates or alternates should contact their CMA delegation chair or component medical society for assistance in identifying the appropriate channel for getting a resolution introduced.

Resolutions can address virtually any medical practice or health-related topic, or any aspect of the policies and activities of organized medicine. The Speaker of the House may edit or revise resolutions for length and clarity, and to delete any inflammatory language, while striving to preserve the author's intent. The Speaker may also reject resolutions that are deemed to be inappropriate as business of the House (for example, resolutions addressing social policy issues with no obvious medical implications). Although this rarely occurs, authors may appeal the Speaker's ruling to the House Rules Committee and ultimately to the entire House of Delegates.

Resolutions typically consist of a series of "Whereas" clauses, which serve to explain the reason(s) for the resolution, and one or more "Resolved" clauses, which state the specific action(s) proposed. Only the "Resolved" clauses are acted on by the House and become CMA policy. Therefore, all "Resolved" clauses must stand alone and not be dependent upon the "Whereases" to be clearly understood.

Following is a sample resolution correctly formatted:

CALIFORNIA MEDICAL ASSOCIATION HOUSE OF DELEGATES

TITLE: Additional Days in the Year
Introduced by: Jane Smith, MD
Author: John Williams, MD

Whereas, it becomes more apparent every year that we cannot do all of the things we have to do in 365 days; and

Whereas, either more days must be created or work must be decreased; therefore be it

RESOLVED: That an additional ten (10) days a year be created; and be it further

RESOLVED: That CMA endorse the concept of ten more days a year.

Under House rules, resolutions should be no more than one page in length. Resolution titles should specify the subject of the resolution and must not be more than six (6) words in length.

After resolutions are received at the CMA offices, fiscal notes and a summary of existing CMA policy on the subject are added for the House's information. If resolutions are submitted to CMA at least 120 days prior to the annual session, the proposals will be reviewed and returned to the authors with cost and policy notes attached. This allows authors to review all elements of the resolution, make any necessary or desired changes, and resubmit or withdraw the resolutions prior to the final deadline of 60 days in advance of the meeting. This procedure is strongly recommended to avoid wasting time on resolutions that reiterate existing CMA policy or call for action already initiated by CMA. More importantly, authors are strongly encouraged to review the CMA Policy Compendium and the current CMA Strategic Plan (both accessible to members online) prior to developing a resolution to determine whether the subject of the proposed resolution is or already has been addressed by CMA.

Resolutions received less than 60 days before the House meets must be reviewed and accepted by the House Rules Committee, which evaluates late resolutions based on the following criteria: the subject of the resolution must be of such a timely nature that it could not be introduced prior to the 60-day deadline and is of such current importance that it cannot wait to be introduced by the author as business for a Board of Trustees meeting scheduled after Annual Session.