

How to Write a Resolution to the MSMS House of Delegates

Introduction

The House of Delegates is the official policy-making body of the Michigan State Medical Society. Resolutions and Board Action Reports are the vehicles used to debate and determine the policies, priorities, and direction of MSMS during the ensuing 12 months and beyond. Therefore, a well-crafted resolution is essential in order to present the most effective case for those issues that are of importance and concern to you.

Resolutions are presented to the MSMS House of Delegates by voting delegates on behalf of their county delegation, specialty society, ethnic medical society, MSMS membership section, or as individual delegates. In order to be considered as regular business of the House of Delegates, ***resolutions must be submitted to MSMS by 5:00 p.m. on either March 1 or the next business day if March 1 falls on a Saturday or Sunday.*** Once received, resolutions are reviewed by MSMS staff for comparison to existing MSMS and AMA policy, legal considerations, and appropriate editing. They are then assigned numbers and referred to one of the six House reference committees or placed on the "Reaffirmation Calendar."

All resolutions for which the Resolveds state either MSMS or AMA existing policy will be placed on a "Reaffirmation Calendar" and voted upon at Sunday's session. A delegate can ask the Committee on Rules and Order of Business to extract a resolution from the Reaffirmation Calendar for referral to a reference committee. The Committee on Rules and Order of Business meets on Saturday morning prior to the opening of the House.

Please note, pursuant to adopted HOD Resolution 65-14, **any resolutions "submitted to the MSMS House of Delegates that require action by the AMA may only be submitted by MSMS members that are also members of the AMA."**

The reference committees are responsible for listening to testimony on the rationale and merits of the submitted resolutions, discussing the issues raised for and against resolutions, and making recommendations to the House of Delegates on the fate of the resolutions.

Process

All resolutions are to be submitted online at <http://www.msms.org/hod>.

To complete the online resolution form, simply fill out the required fields and hit the "submit" button. Persons completing the form will need to the following information:

- Name, email, telephone number, affiliated organization, and county of the original author
- Resolution title
- The name of the person introducing the resolution and for whom the resolution is being introduced
- Resolution text
- Fiscal information (if applicable)
- Footnotes/Endnotes (if applicable)

Deadline

5:00 p.m. on March 1 (or the next business day if March 1 falls on a Saturday or Sunday)

Late Resolutions

Resolutions received after the deadline, will be considered late resolutions and will be referred to the Committee on Rules and Order of Business which meets on Saturday morning. The Committee reviews any late resolutions on the following criteria:

- Could the resolution have been submitted before the deadline?
- Did new developments after the deadline justify the acceptance of the resolution?
- Were there any extenuating circumstances?
- Are there any other resolutions that cover the same logic?

If the Committee on Rules and Order of Business agrees to accept a late resolution, the resolution will be immediately referred to one of the six reference committees for testimony and consideration later that morning. The final recommendation as to the resolution's fate will be submitted to the House as part of the respective committee's report on Sunday.

If the Committee on Rules and Order of Business does not accept a late resolution, a delegate may ask to have the resolution extracted from the Report of the Committee on Rules and Order of Business on Sunday morning and present his or her arguments before the Committee of the Whole. If the House concurs with the Committee on Rules and Order of Business's recommendation to not accept the late resolution, there is no further recourse and the resolution will not be considered.

Structure of a Resolution

Title:

- Select a title that is brief and accurately reflects the action for which the resolution calls.

Body:

- Begin with the inclusion of one or more "whereas" statements.
- "Whereas" statements explain why the resolution is needed, provide documentation in support of the resolution (i.e., data, statistics, references), and contribute to the general understanding of the subject matter.
- "Whereas" statements lead into one or more "resolved" sections.
- "Resolved" sections define the "ask" or intent of the resolution (e.g., the author's desired action).
- Because the House only adopts the "resolved" sections, each "resolved" section must be able to stand independent of the "whereas" statements.

- **Example of an improperly written “resolved” statement, as the reader cannot readily identify the targeted issue(s), specific action requested, or to whom responsibility for acting upon the issue(s) is directed:**

RESOLVED: That physicians need to know about the process and extent of diversion in the community and need to act as described above.

- **Example of a properly written “resolved” statement in which the issue and “ask” are clearly stated:**

RESOLVED: That MSMS actively educate physicians about the process and extent of prescribed opiate medication diversion in the community and urge the health care providers prescribing daily opiates in chronic pain patients to monitor those patients at a minimum with yearly quantitative urine drug screens.

Tips

Paying particular attention to the following will enhance your chances of drafting a successful resolution:

- Ensure the accuracy of information presented in the resolution.
- Determine whether the topic of the resolution is existing MSMS and/or AMA policy prior to submission. MSMS and AMA policy can be found on their respective websites.
 - If the Resolved statement is already existing policy, the resolution will be placed on the "Reaffirmation Calendar."
 - If the Resolved statement is consistent with existing policy, specifically state the amendment you want to that policy.
 - If the Resolved statement is not consistent with existing policy, indicate that you want to replace the existing policy.
- Ensure that the desired intent or “ask” is clear.
- Consider whether the requested action is feasible (i.e., is it relevant to medicine and to what the Michigan State Medical Society can reasonably affect).
- Determine whether there are cost implications to the proposed policy, program, or action and if so, select an estimated cost range.
- Contact your respective county society, specialty society, or sections to learn of their resolution vetting process should you wish for them to introduce the resolution on your behalf.

Contacts

MSMS staff is available to answer additional questions you may have. Please direct questions to Stacey Hettiger at 517-336-5766 or shettiger@msms.org.

Thank you for your interest in helping to establish the business of the MSMS House of Delegates. Please remember, only online resolutions will be accepted and they must be received by 5:00 p.m. on March 1 (or the next business day if March 1 falls on a Saturday or Sunday).