

**Responsibilities and Expectations
of AHA Constituency Section Governing Council Members
Approved by the Board
April 28, 2006**

The Constituency Section Governing Councils of the American Hospital Association provide input and participate in the overall AHA policy development process as well as take an important role in identifying and tracking issues of special interest to the types of organizations and services they represent. They play a liaison role with other health care and consumer organizations concerned with similar issues.

Constituency Sections encompass the Membership Section for Health Care Systems; General Constituency Sections for Federal Hospitals, Metropolitan Hospitals, and Small or Rural Hospitals; and Special Sections for Long-Term Care and Rehabilitation, Maternal and Child Health, and Psychiatric and Substance Abuse Services. Each has an elected or appointed governing council of up to 24 members.

In addition to their collective responsibilities for member communication and assistance in policy development, AHA has expectations of individual governing council members related to governing council meetings activities as well as to their leadership role in the Association.

Responsibilities of the Constituency Section Governing Councils

- **Member Communication.** The governing councils assist in fostering and maintaining communication between AHA and its membership. They fulfill this responsibility primarily by serving as forums where constituency viewpoints can be shared and discussed in an effort to reach consensus.
- **Issue Identification.** The governing councils are responsible for identifying problems and needs of special interest to the types of organizations and services they represent and for assisting in the development of programs to meet those needs.
- **Policy Development.** The governing councils are responsible for assisting in the development of Association policy by identifying potential policy issues of importance to the membership. They are also responsible for providing advice and counsel on policy proposals to be considered by the Board and, at times, by serving as ad hoc policy committees.
- **Implementation of Policy and Programs.** The governing councils are responsible for supporting and implementing AHA policy and programs and urging their support by hospitals and health systems.

Expectations of Governing Council Members

Expectations Related to Governing Council Meetings and Activities

- **Attendance.** Attend all governing council meetings and related meetings of committees, task forces, etc., on which the individual serves. The governing councils usually have three regularly scheduled meetings per year.
- **Conflict of interest.** Avoid conflicts of interest; if conflicts arise between a governing council member's personal interests and his or her obligations to act in the best interest of the Association as a whole, the individual should disclose the conflict and refrain from acting on the affected issues.
- **Confidentiality.** Protect the confidentiality of private or confidential information, such as executive session deliberations, designated policy discussions, relationships with other organizations, personnel matters, financial information, etc. All media calls concerning AHA matters should be directed to communications staff at the Association.
- **Compliance.** Know and comply with Bylaws of the American Hospital Association, the Association Regulations of the American Hospital Association, and Administrative Regulations of the constituency sections.
- **Preparation.** Review agenda materials in advance of meetings.
- **AHA representative.** Serve as a representative at meetings of state, regional, and metropolitan hospital associations; other health care and consumer organizations concerned with similar issues; or other meetings he or she may attend.
- **Stay current.** Be continually aware of developments on health policy issues.
- **Focus on Association as a whole; objectivity.** Each governing council is by its intrinsic purpose a forum for AHA institutional members sharing common interests, functions, or concerns, which may differ from other constituency sections and other members of the Association. The governing councils are designed to ensure that all constituent perspectives are considered in the policy positions taken by the Association. Once debate and discussion have been completed, however, each governing council member is expected to focus on the best interests of the entire Association and recognize that the ultimate constituency is the membership at large.
- **Leadership in discussions.** Help enhance the quality of governing council discussion by framing and presenting issues, leading discussion groups, or undertaking similar activities as requested.
- **Governing council relationships.** Respect the perspectives, integrity, and abilities of fellow governing council members while, at the same time, presenting dissenting viewpoints.
- **Consideration of all points of views.** Discuss the full range of opinions and options before taking a position; alert the governing council to differing views or

concerns held by others both in and outside the constituency, even if they are not held by the governing council member.

- **Issue identification.** Identify issues of importance to the Association, and contact the governing council chairman or secretary to have those issues added to the governing council's agenda.

Leadership Expectations

- **Support of AHA vision and mission.** Strive to make the AHA community and health-focused vision and mission part of the governing council member's own organization's goals and activities.
- **Visible AHA spokesman and supporter.** Governing council members are expected to draw attention to and explain AHA positions and activities in discussions with colleagues.
- **Disclose differences.** In the rare instance when a governing council member's disagreement with AHA policy may become public, the member is expected to advise the AHA staff in advance of a public disclosure.
- **Grassroots lobbying.** Actively advocate AHA positions with legislators and regulators.
- **Participation in major AHA events.** As leaders of the Association, governing council members are urged to attend the AHA Annual Membership Meeting and the AHA-Health Forum Leadership Summit.
- **Member recruitment and retention.** Take the lead in recruitment and retention efforts related to colleagues in their region or constituency.
- **Participation in AHA programs and services¹.** Board members, or their institutions or organizations, should strongly consider participating in multiple major AHA programs, services, and initiatives, as well as coalition or other organizations AHA has established for the benefit of the field. Where such participation involves a personal contribution, Board members should contribute to the extent their personal circumstances permit. Where such participation involves an organizational contribution or membership, Board members should consider the benefits to their own organization, the benefits to the field as a whole, and the positive precedent such participation would set for other AHA members.

¹ These include, but are not limited to:

- Coalition to Protect America's Health Care
- Partnership for Action
- Health Research and Educational Trust
- Institute for Diversity
- Health Forum
- National Alliance for Health Information Technology (NAHIT)
- Center for Healthcare Governance
- Quality (Center)
- AHA Solutions

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- **Participation in the PAC of AHA.** Board members, or their institutions or organizations, should strongly consider contributing to the PAC of AHA to the extent their personal circumstances permit.
- **Personal activities.** Conduct oneself and their organization's activities so as to reflect credit on the Association.

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