



AMA election process

Introduction

Officers and four councils are elected by the American Medical Association (AMA) House of Delegates (HOD) at the Annual Meeting. Nominations for these offices are widely solicited throughout the Federation, and campaigns are often spirited and are conducted under rules established by the AMA-HOD, which may be modified from time to time. This democratic process allows delegates ample opportunity to become acquainted with the candidates and their views. The elections are by secret ballot and are under the supervision of the Committee on Rules and Credentials and the chief teller, who are appointed by the speaker and vice speaker.

Nominations

The AMA Board of Trustees (BOT) solicits nominations twice a year for the four elected councils, which are the Council on Constitution and Bylaws, Council on Medical Education, Council on Medical Service, and Council on Science and Public Health. The deadline for receipt of nominations is March 15 of each year, and the AMA-BOT announces council nominees after its April meeting.

Officers are nominated by their sponsoring societies; they are not nominated by the AMA-BOT. As a courtesy and to keep the headquarters informed, these candidates are asked to send a letter to the executive vice president announcing their intention to seek elective office.

Officer and council candidates usually announce their intention to seek office well in advance of the Annual Meeting, by distributing an announcement on the last day of the preceding Annual OR Interim Meeting OR by a general mailing to delegates and alternate delegates between meetings of the AMA-HOD. Only one announcement is permitted. An announcement of candidacy includes only the candidate's name, email address and URL, the office sought and a list of endorsing societies. (G-610.020[4])

Announcements of candidacy are considered separate and distinct from active campaigning. Active campaigns for AMA elective office may not begin until the Board of Trustees has announced the nominees for council seats after its April meeting. Active campaigning includes mass outreach activities directed to all or a significant portion of the members of the House of Delegates and communicated by or on behalf of the candidate (e.g., letters and emails). (G-610.020[1])

At the Opening Session of the Annual Meeting, officer candidates in a contested election will give their own two-minute nominating speech. The order of the speeches will be determined by lottery. No speeches for unopposed candidates will be given, except for president-elect. When there is no contest for president-elect, the candidate will ask a delegate to place his or her name in nomination and the election will then be by acclamation. When there are two or more candidates for the office of president-elect, a two-minute nomination speech will be given by a delegate. In addition, the speaker will schedule a debate in front of the AMA-HOD to be conducted by rules established by the speaker.

There are no nominating or seconding speeches for council candidates; the chair of the AMA-BOT places their names in nomination at the Opening Session of the AMA-HOD after which the speaker will call for additional nominations from the floor.

Campaign rules

This listing of campaign rules is comprised of several policies adopted by the AMA-HOD and procedures developed by the speakers to comply with AMA-HOD actions. Where AMA-HOD policies are listed, the meeting(s) at which the action was taken and the relevant AMA policy number are listed in parentheses following the policy. The rules are listed in general categories.

Guiding principles for AMA-HOD Elections

The following principles provide guidance on how the AMA-HOD elections should be conducted and how the selection of AMA leaders should occur:

1. AMA delegates should: (a) avail themselves of all available background information about candidates for elected positions in the AMA; (b) determine which candidates are best qualified to help the AMA achieve its mission; and (c) make independent decisions about which candidates to vote for.
2. Any electioneering practices that distort the democratic processes of the AMA-HOD elections, such as vote trading for the purpose of supporting candidates, are unacceptable.
3. Candidates for elected positions should comply with the requirements and the spirit of the AMA-HOD policy on campaigning and campaign spending.
4. Candidates and their sponsoring organizations should exercise restraint in campaign spending. Federation organizations should establish clear and detailed guidelines on the appropriate level of resources that should be allocated to the political campaigns of their members for AMA leadership positions.
5. Incumbency should not assure the re-election of an individual to an AMA leadership position.
6. Service in any AMA leadership position should not assure ascendancy to another leadership position. (I-01, G-610.021)

Expenses, events, parties and other activities

1. Campaign expenditures and activities should be limited to prudent and reasonable levels necessary for adequate candidate exposure to the delegates. (I-80, G-610.020[3])
2. There will be only one big party at the Annual Meeting financed by a coalition or a state or specialty delegation irrespective of the number of candidates from that society or coalition. At these events, alcohol may be served only on a cash or no-host bar basis.
This would limit a candidate to only one big party at the Annual Meeting whether financed by a coalition or a state or specialty delegation. This would also limit a state or specialty society or delegation to one big party irrespective of the number of candidates from that society or coalition. (I-92, Reaffirmed and Revised, A-97, G-610.020[6])
3. Campaign gifts can be distributed at only the Annual Meeting in the not for official business bag and at one campaign party. Campaign gifts should only be distributed during the Annual Meeting and not mailed to delegates and alternate delegates in advance of the meeting. (I-92, G-610.020[9])
4. Campaign memorabilia shall be limited to a button, pin, sticker or other low-cost item, the maximum cost of which shall be determined by the speaker of the AMA-HOD. No other campaign memorabilia shall be distributed at any time. (I-96, G-610.020[9])
5. The speaker has determined the following expense limitations for campaign-related giveaways.
 - The cost of stickers, pins or buttons will not be included in the spending limits. Stickers, pins or buttons should be simple and not be “gifts” in disguise.

- Each candidate is limited to spending no more than two dollars (\$2) per delegate and alternate delegate for memorabilia and/or giveaways, including drawings or door prizes for items to be delivered either at the meeting or later. For 2011, the states, specialty societies, government services and sections are allocated 521 delegates and 521 alternate delegates for a total spending limit of \$2,084. This limit applies for the entire year and is specifically intended to include the total cost of those items distributed in the bag at the Opening Session as well as any raffle or drawing conducted on behalf of a candidate. This expense may include quantity discounts available to anyone but must be calculated at full retail price regardless of the actual price spent for the item.
6. Candidates for AMA office should not attend meetings of the state medical societies unless officially invited and could accept reimbursement of travel expenses by the state society in accordance with the policies of the society. (I-93, Reaffirmed I-96, G-610.020[12])

Announcements, literature and publicity

1. There should be no formal campaign activities during the Interim Meeting. This would not preclude distribution of an announcement of candidacy:
 - *On the last day of the Annual Meeting; OR*
 - *On the last day of the Interim Meeting; OR*
 - *One announcement of candidacy by a mailing prior to the Interim Meeting.*

This rule would prohibit the campaign parties at the Interim Meeting and the distribution of campaign literature and gifts at the Interim Meeting. Individual outreach, such as small group meetings, including informal dinners, meant to familiarize others with a candidate's opinions and positions on issues are allowed at the Interim Meeting. (I-92, Reaffirmed I-96, Modified A-11, G-610.020[4])
2. Displays of campaign posters, signs and literature are prohibited in public areas of hotels in which Annual Meetings are held.

Displays of campaign posters, signs and literature in public areas of hotels in which Annual Meetings are held detract from the dignity of the position being sought and are unsightly. Campaign posters may be displayed at the campaign parties and campaign literature may be distributed in the non-official business bag for members of the AMA-HOD. (I-92, Reaffirmed I-96, G-610.020[7])
3. A reduction in the volume of telephone calls from candidates, and literature and letters by or on behalf of candidates should be encouraged. The use of electronic messages to contact electors should also be minimized, and if used must allow recipients to opt out of receiving future messages.

The Election Manual was initiated as a mechanism to reduce the number of telephone calls and mailings members of the AMA-HOD receive from or on behalf of candidates. The Election Manual provides an equal opportunity for each candidate to present the material he or she considers important to bring before the members of the AMA-HOD and should relieve the need for the additional expenditures incurred in making non-scheduled telephone calls and duplicative mailings. (I-92, Modified A-11, G-610.020[8])
4. Publication of the AMA *Election Manual* should be continued. (I-96, G-610.020[2])
5. Publication of candidate interviews in *American Medical News* should be featured prior to AMA elections. (I-96, G-610.020[11])
6. No campaign literature shall be distributed, and no mass outreach electronic messages shall be transmitted after the Opening Session of the AMA-HOD. (I-96, Modified A-11, G-610.020[7])

Interviews and presentations

1. Every state and specialty society delegation is encouraged to participate in a regional caucus, for the purposes of candidate review activities. (I-80, G-610.020[13])
2. The Speakers' Office shall coordinate the scheduling of candidate interviews for general officer positions (trustees, president-elect, speaker and vice speaker). (I-96, G-610.020[10])
3. The speaker has directed that the Office of House of Delegates Affairs arrange a system for scheduling candidate interviews as follows:
 - Interviews will be scheduled from noon Friday to 6 p.m. Monday, the evening before the election. On these days interview sessions may be scheduled from 7 a.m. until 9 p.m. except for times when the AMA-HOD or reference committees are in session and except for when the usual hospitality suites are open.
 - Interviews for officer candidates will be booked in 10-minute units. Each candidate will be given one open 10-minute period of time between interviews. Each caucus can allocate one or more 10-minute units per session. Caucus staff should notify the Speakers' Office when their interview sessions are scheduled, the room name, and how many 10-minute units (candidates) should be scheduled in those time slots. The Office of House of Delegates Affairs will prepare and distribute the initial schedule according to the AMA-HOD action. *Adjustments or revisions should be arranged with the caucus staff and/or other candidates affected.*

Elections

The AMA elections are held on Tuesday of the Annual Meeting from 7:30 until 8:45 a.m. under the supervision of the Committee on Rules and Credentials and the chief teller. Poll hours will not be extended beyond the times posted. All delegates eligible to vote must be in line to vote at the time appointed for the close of polls. Only credentialed delegates are permitted to cast a ballot. If a delegate cannot participate in the election, he or she may have a designated alternate delegate properly credentialed at the AMA registration desk prior to the election. Candidates are listed on the ballot in alphabetical order by name only. AMA bylaws require simultaneous elections that call for the exact number of votes for each vacancy. Each ballot clearly states the number of votes that should be cast. Ballots containing more or fewer votes will not be counted by the election software. During runoffs, ballots containing more or fewer votes will be declared invalid by the chief teller. Also during runoffs, if a delegate makes a mistake and spoils the ballot, he or she should immediately signal a teller and request another ballot. A majority vote of the ballots cast is required for election.

If all of the vacancies are not filled on the first ballot, a runoff ballot will be distributed and collected by the tellers on the floor of the AMA-HOD. AMA bylaws dictate that if three or more members of the AMA-BOT or any council are still to be elected, the number of nominees in the runoff election shall be no more than twice the number of remaining vacancies less one. If two or fewer members of the AMA-HOD or council are still to be elected, the number of nominees in the runoff shall be no more than twice the number of remaining vacancies. In either case, the nominees in runoff elections are determined by retaining those who received the greater number of votes on the preceding ballot and eliminating the nominee(s) who received the fewest number of votes on the preceding ballot, except where there is a tie. This process will continue until all the vacancies are filled.

Those candidates who are elected officially take office at the conclusion of the Annual Meeting.