

Submitting a resolution & how policy is developed

Contribute to the policymaking process

One of the unique benefits of membership in the RFS is the chance to participate in the policymaking process. Any RFS member can submit a resolution to be considered at its semiannual meetings.

Positions established at the RFS meetings help set the agenda for the section, giving guidance on projects to pursue, products to develop and issues to influence.

View the new module [“How AMA Policy is Made.”](#)

What is a resolution?

A resolution is a proposal that asks the RFS or AMA to take a position and/or an action. A resolution consists of at least one directive to take action or a new/amended position statement accompanied by supporting statements or facts. Once a resolution is submitted, it is debated at the RFS meeting and considered by the reference committee.

If directed at the RFS and adopted at the meeting, the resolved clause becomes known as a position statement and is added to the [RFS Digest of Actions](#) (PDF, members only). If directed at AMA, depending on its urgency, it can either be immediately forwarded to the House of Delegates (HOD) at the same meeting or sent forth at a future meeting. If the resolution is adopted in the HOD, it becomes AMA policy and is added to [PolicyFinder](#).

Before submitting a resolution, members should ask themselves:

- Does the proposal deal with resident or fellow issues?
- Is the proposed matter feasible? (Can it be done?)
- Is it advisable? (Should it be done?)
- Is it efficient? (What is the cost-benefit ratio?)
- Has a similar report or resolution been presented and rejected? If so, why?
- Is it consistent with current AMA policy?

What a resolution should include

- Title: Clearly state the issue being addressed
- Author(s): List the primary author or sponsoring society first followed by co-authors or co-sponsors
- Whereas clause(s)
- Resolved clause(s)
- References
- Relevant RFS position statements & AMA policy

Resolution template (DOCX)

Sample resolution (DOCX)

Writing whereas clauses for a resolution

- Should be one sentence long and flow in a logical order
- Provide information on why the resolution should be considered, describe the problem and explain or support how the resolved clauses will correct the problem
- Include relevant statistics, analyses, surveys and commentaries, and cite statements of fact with the appropriate reference. Use this information to help defend the resolution during debate at the RFS meeting

Writing resolved clauses for a resolution

- Should be one sentence long with the language understood independently of whereas clauses
- Either calls on the RFS to take a specific action or position and should begin as: "RESOLVED, That our AMA-RFS..."; or calls on the AMA to take a specific action or position and should begin as: "RESOLVED, That our AMA..."

References in a resolution

All resolutions must cite pertinent references and identify existing relevant RFS position statements and AMA policy on the issue. To research RFS position statements and AMA policy, review both the

RFS Digest of Actions (PDF, members only) and the AMA PolicyFinder.

Submitting resolutions

After completing the resolution, please submit to RFS staff at rfs@ama-assn.org. Resolutions must be submitted by the deadline, typically six weeks prior to the meeting.

Late & emergency resolution process

A resolution is considered late if it is submitted after the resolution deadline but 7 days prior to the meeting being called to order. A resolution is considered an emergency if it is submitted within 7 days of the meeting or after the meeting has been called to order.

The rules committee makes a recommendation as to whether the late or emergency resolution should be considered at the meeting. Voting members accept or reject this recommendation.

Late resolutions approved for consideration at the meeting are reviewed by the reference committee. Conversely, emergency resolutions approved for consideration are debated at the meeting without being reviewed by the reference committee.

Reference committee role in reviewing resolutions & developing policy

The RFS reference committee reviews all submitted policy proposals. It hears testimony on resolutions and reports during the reference committee hearing and subsequently deliberates as a group in a closed session.

The committee prepares a report summarizing testimony and makes recommendations of action which include:

- Adopt/Adopt as amended
- Not adopt
- Refer for further study and report back at a later date (typically assigned to a standing committee following the meeting)
- Refer to the Governing Council to make a decision and determine the appropriate action

The reference committee responds to questions and explains the rationale behind the recommendations in the report.

Reference committees hearings at the RFS meetings

Day 1: On day one of the meeting, the reference committee hears testimony on the merits of resolutions and reports. The hearing is open to all resident physicians, guests, interested outsiders and the press.

Prior to the assembly meeting make sure to:

- Prepare a brief statement to introduce your resolution at the meeting
- Prepare to defend your resolution at the meeting

Reference committees reports

Day 2: On day two of the meeting, the reference committee report is distributed and includes the committee's recommendations regarding each resolution and report.

A consent calendar, which includes a list of all resolutions and reports reviewed by the committee, is presented at the start of the business meeting. Voting members may move to extract any resolution or report to propose amendments or alter the committee's recommendation. All extracted items are heard on an individual basis. Resolutions and reports not extracted are voted on collectively.

For more information, please contact RFS staff at rfs@ama-assn.org.