Sept. 13, 2021 update: Official call to the November 2021 Special Meeting of the AMA House of Delegates

Pursuant to the actions of the American Medical Association (AMA) Board of Trustees (Board) previously communicated to you on August 27 and September 10, this notice will serve as the Official Call to convene a Special Meeting of the AMA House of Delegates (HOD) on November 12-16, 2021. The purpose of this meeting, as defined by the action of the Board, is to conduct priority business of the Association. This Special Meeting will be convened virtually on the same platforms, Lumi and Zoom, that were used at the November 2020 and June 2021 Special Meetings.

As previously communicated the schedule was developed to expand the time available for deliberation of business in reference committee hearings and House sessions. Reference committee hearings will again be held on Saturday and Sunday. The House will commence with the Opening Session at 7 pm Central Standard Time (CST), Friday, November 12 and convene again on Monday, November 15 at 10 am CST. We anticipate that we will utilize all of the scheduled time through Tuesday until our business is completed. Note: We will NOT have a hard stop on Tuesday, November 16, as there is no need for travel time, and this day should have already been cleared on your calendars.

Business of the House

The inherent inefficiencies of a virtual meeting demand a prioritization of the business to be considered, and thus the Board motion specified that the purpose of the meeting is to conduct priority business. In keeping with this defined purpose, all delegates and delegations are strongly encouraged to submit only priority resolutions. Our councils and the Board have been asked to do the same. To facilitate the prioritization process, resolutions MUST BE ACCOMPANIED by a statement of priority (not to exceed 250 words), and if submitting more than 1 resolution, delegations MUST RANK their resolutions in order of priority. Resolutions submitted without these required elements will not be accepted.

A Resolutions Committee will be convened to review all resolutions and make recommendations to the House regarding the priority of the resolutions. Your submitted prioritization statement and ranking will be considered by the Resolutions Committee as a factor in their recommendation to the House. The final determination of the business to be considered by the House at this Special Meeting will be
decided by majority vote during the Opening Session of the House.

The Prioritization Matrix (PDF) that was used for the J21 Special Meeting will again be utilized at this meeting. Delegates considering submitting a resolution are encouraged to review this matrix. The detailed Prioritization Process (PDF) is posted on the AMA website for review.

**Online forums**

Online forums will once again be open for comment on all submitted resolutions and reports. Your Speakers request that all authors please present an opening comment regarding their resolutions/reports. In addition, we ask that members comment not only on the merits of the proffered resolution/report, but also to the priority of the resolutions. Your Speakers strongly encourage the use of the Online Forum to facilitate the live deliberations. As a reminder, there is no limit on debate via the Online Forum, however, there will be a limit at the live virtual hearing.

To encourage use of the Online Forums, reference committees will be instructed to give equal weight to testimony presented in the Online Forums to that presented at the live hearings.

**Reference committees**

Reference committees are scheduled Saturday morning and afternoon and Sunday morning. To facilitate deliberation of as much business as possible, your Speakers have determined that we will once again use all 8 reference committees typically held at our Annual Meetings (CC&B, A-G). Reference committee reports will be posted as soon as available. In general, reference committee reports will be considered by the House in the order in which they become available for review. Saturday and Sunday late afternoon/ evening and early morning Monday have been kept open on the schedule to allow for Delegations to consider the reports.

**House of Delegates session**

The Opening Session of the House will be held Friday, November 12 at 7 pm CST. The House will consider reference committee reports beginning at 10 am CST Monday and continuing on Tuesday until all business has been completed. Please keep open Tuesday afternoon as we do not know when we will adjourn.

**See preliminary schedule below for further details.**

Your Speakers are sensitive to the fact that our schedule continues past sundown on Friday and on through Sunday. Delegates for whom this schedule potentially creates a conflict may wish to coordinate with their alternate delegates. Saturday and Sunday will include reference committees where participation is optional, and individuals are reminded of the opportunity to present testimony in
the Online Forum which will be open for several weeks. If further accommodations are needed, please contact us at HOD@ama-assn.org.

Health equity forum

A Health Equity Forum will be offered on Sunday afternoon, November 14. This program is under development by management and the Center for Health Equity. Further details will be forthcoming.

Email addresses

Although this notice is being sent both electronically and by postal mail, delivery delays and the need to expedite communication as we approach the upcoming meeting necessitate that we have correct email addresses for ALL members of the HOD, including alternate delegates and any other involved individuals. Email will once again be our primary method of sharing important information, including delegate credentials, with the House. In some cases this notice may have been sent to “spam” or been removed by a security filter. If you receive this notice by postal mail only, you need to confirm your email address and check your filters.

In addition, because delegation rosters may have changed since our June 2021 Special Meeting, we remind delegation chairs and/or staff to confirm that all delegation members have received this communication electronically. If you or a member of your delegation needs to correct or update their email address, please contact the HOD office at HOD@ama-assn.org immediately.

Committee volunteers

Your Speakers are seeking multiple volunteers for the Resolutions Committee, Rules and Credentials Committee, and reference committees. Those interested in serving on reference committees and particularly those interested in serving as a chair should be experienced in working via a virtual meeting format. Please submit a “Committee Volunteer Form” which can also be downloaded from the Speaker’s Page on the AMA site.

Final reminders

Please watch for further communication from us as details are finalized. As a reminder, notices regarding the upcoming November Special Meeting will have N21 in the subject line (which is short for the November 2021 meeting of the AMA House of Delegates) and will be sent from ama.delegates@groups.ama-assn.org. Please add this address to your contact list.

The tentative schedule is listed below.

Your Speakers share your disappointment that circumstances have once again prevented us from
meeting in person, but rest assured that plans are well underway to facilitate the policymaking role of our House of Delegates in a fair and deliberative fashion.

Tentative schedule

Central Standard Time

**Wednesday, October 13:**
**Resolution Submission On Time Deadline**
Societies whose meetings adjourn after Oct. 8 will have 7 days from their adjournment to submit their priority business but no later than noon Nov. 7
NOTE: Reports and resolutions will be posted to the Online Member Forum as soon as feasible.

**Sunday, November 7, noon:**
**Deadline for supplemental resolution submission from the sections and late resolutions from the Federation** ("Sunday Tote")

**Friday, November 12, 7 pm:**
**HOD Opening Session**
Ceremonial Opening
Speeches
Rules & Credentials Report
Resolutions Committee Final Report considered by HOD

**Saturday, November 13:**
9:00 am - Morning Reference Committee Hearings (3)
1:00 pm - Afternoon Reference Committee Hearings (3)

**Sunday November 14:**
9:00 am - Reference Committee Hearings (2)
1:00 pm - Health Equity Forum

**Monday November 15:**
10:00 am - Second Session of HOD presentation of reference committee reports
12:00-1:00 pm - AMPAC Capitol Club Luncheon

**Tuesday, November 16:**
9 am until completed - Final Session HOD
Sept. 10, 2021 update: November 2021 Special Meeting of the HOD

As you were previously informed, the Board of Trustees suspended the regularly scheduled Interim Meeting and requested the Speaker to call for a Special Meeting to be held on the original scheduled dates. Simultaneously, the Speakers were asked to fully investigate the option of a hybrid meeting as an alternative to a virtual meeting. After thorough consideration, your Board of Trustees has decided to proceed with an entirely virtual meeting on November 12-16, 2021, the details of which will follow in the Speakers’ Official Call to the Special Meeting.

For the past several weeks, your Speakers, our AMA event planning and HOD teams, and the technical and audio/video consultants thoroughly investigated a hybrid option. We began by researching locations that could accommodate our HOD meeting and were available November 12-16. We also sought a locale with high COVID vaccination uptake and a relatively low COVID infection rate. Only one city had availability based on these criteria. A team was then sent to this location for a site visit and confirmed that it could house a hybrid meeting.

Recognizing that robust in-person attendance was unlikely, due to varying constraints on individual delegates, your Speakers and our technical team reviewed options for a hybrid experience. The hybrid would function in effect as a virtual meeting with added in-person attendees. The number of delegates who would attend in-person is not known. Unquestionably, the experience, even for those attending in-person, would not replicate our past in-person meetings that we all fondly remember. The meeting would have to be held in a convention center, a 10-minute walk away from the host hotel. Caucus meeting rooms would be split between the hotel and the convention center. The use of convention centers in the past has met with dissatisfaction from participants.

The debate in the House could be managed with some adjustments, but the hybrid option would suffer from the same or potentially more inefficiencies as our recent virtual meetings. Of greater concern, reference committee hearings would be hampered by the inability to offer live video testimony input from remote participants, leaving them with only the option to offer testimony via chat that would be then projected and/or read by the chair in the hearing room. Your Board felt this presented an inherently unequal experience for virtual attendees that was unacceptable.

Given the unpredictability of the pandemic, the situation in mid-November at any venue is of potential
concern. While the location is currently relatively “safe,” circumstances in two months are hardly
guaranteed, as the past two months have clearly shown. In addition, most attendees would need to
traverse crowded airports, exposing themselves to potentially unvaccinated or even ill travelers.
Breakthrough cases have been increasingly documented, which could lead not only to illness among
our attendees, but also to potential spread from our participants to others during their travel and upon
their return home. This risk weighed heavily on your Board.

Ultimately, after considerable deliberation of these and other concerns, and the fact that the meeting
would not be a true “in-person” experience, the Board made the difficult decision to abandon the
hybrid option and have asked the Speakers to proceed with the call to a virtual Special Meeting,
which is forthcoming.

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Responses should be directed to HOD@ama-assn.org

**Aug. 27, 2021 update: 2021 Interim Meeting suspended**

To further update you following the email dated August 13, this communication is sent to inform you
that by action of the Board of Trustees under Emergency Bylaw 13.1.1 the 2021 AMA House of
Delegates Interim Meeting scheduled to be held in-person in Orlando, Florida, on November 12-16
has been suspended. Your Board has determined that conditions in Orlando, due to the surge of the
B.1.617.2 (delta) variant of the severe acute respiratory syndrome coronavirus 2 (SARS-CoV-2) in
that location, are not conducive to readily convening a quorum of our House. The Board additionally
has instructed the Speaker to call a Special Meeting of the House of Delegates, under Bylaw 2.12.2,
to be held on November 12-16, 2021, with further details to be contained in the Official Call to this
Special Meeting. Your Board continues to explore alternative options to convene this Special Meeting,
including a virtual meeting or a hybrid solution at an alternate site. We anticipate that the Official Call
will be sent to the House on or about September 13, 2021.

We ask that you hold the dates of this meeting, **November 12-16, 2021, OPEN**, as we **WILL convene**
the Special Meeting on these dates. In addition, we recommend that you not open your schedules on
any part of these dates at this time.

Thank you for your patience as we explore all of the options available to us for this Special Meeting.

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Responses should be directed to HOD@ama-assn.org
Aug. 13, 2021 update: Planning for the 2021 Interim Meeting

We know that many of you are anxious to hear about plans for November’s Interim Meeting. We are obviously aware of the delta variant and the current situation in the Orlando area. We continue to monitor the situation hoping that there will be improvement in the near future. While plans remain fluid, we want to communicate our current plans.

Pursuant to a July action by our Board, we are continuing to plan for the meeting to be an in-person event. This decision is based upon the fact that we can pivot from an in-person meeting to a virtual meeting much more easily than the reverse. However, if we need to pivot to a virtual meeting, we have begun to think of the contingencies that would be needed to accommodate the pivot.

Please note that the dates for our meeting will be Nov. 12-16, regardless of the format. We would encourage you to not make travel plans at this time, but for those wishing to proceed, we encourage you to check with your airline carrier regarding cancellation policies. For your information, the Swan and Dolphin Hotel has a 5-day cancellation policy.

The following is our tentative plan for both possibilities.

In-person meeting plan

If the meeting is to occur in-person, to help ensure the safety of all participants we will expect all attendees to be fully vaccinated against COVID. In addition, we will implement additional safety measures as well and follow all CDC guidelines current at the time of the meeting, including masking indoors as is currently recommended.

Anticipating an increased volume of business after a two-year hiatus from in-person meetings, we have altered the usual schedule to allow more time for reference committee hearings and HOD deliberation. To accommodate this, the Opening Session of the House of Delegates will move to Friday evening, Nov. 12, at 7 p.m., with reference committees getting underway on Saturday afternoon and continuing on Sunday morning. The schedule would then be as follows (note all times are in Eastern):

- Friday, Nov. 12 – 7 p.m., Opening session
- Saturday, Nov. 13 – Morning, caucus time
- Saturday, Nov. 13 – 1 p.m., Second session (acceptance of business)
- Saturday, Nov. 13 – 1:30 p.m., Reference committee hearings
- Sunday, Nov. 14 – 8 a.m., Remaining reference committee hearings
- Sunday, Nov. 14 – Afternoon, Health Equity Forum
- Monday, Nov. 15 – 10 a.m., Third session of the HOD, with lunch break about noon

URL: https://www.ama-assn.org/house-delegates/interim-meeting/november-2021-special-meeting-hod-speakers-updates

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Tuesday, Nov. 16 – 8 a.m.-noon, Final session of the HOD

As per Bylaw 2.11.3.1.2, resolutions from the Sections and any late resolutions would have to be submitted prior to the close of the Opening Session of the House.

Virtual Meeting Plan

Should the Board determine that an emergency condition exists such that the Interim Meeting has to be suspended, we anticipate that a Special Meeting of the House would be called. In this case, we will use the same dates for the Special Meeting to begin Friday, Nov. 12 and conclude Tuesday, Nov. 16. Please note that as no travel will be necessary on Tuesday, the meeting will end at the conclusion of all business and not necessarily by noon. Schedule changes, as detailed below, are necessitated to accommodate multiple time zones and to expand the available hours for reference committee hearings and HOD deliberation.

The schedule would then be as follows (note all times are Central):

- Sunday, Nov. 7 – Noon, deadline for Section and late resolution submission
- Friday, Nov. 12 – 7 p.m., Opening session
- Saturday, Nov. 13 – 9 a.m., Reference committee hearings
- Saturday, Nov. 13 – 1 p.m., Reference committee hearings
- Sunday, Nov. 14 – 9 a.m., Remaining reference committee hearings
- Sunday, Nov. 14 – Afternoon, Health Equity Forum
- Monday, Nov. 15 – 9 a.m., Third session of the HOD, with lunch break about noon
- Tuesday, Nov. 16 – 9 a.m. - ?, Final session of the HOD

While our virtual meetings have improved with experience, the inefficiencies of the virtual format will again necessitate the use of a Resolution Committee and a request for all to limit their submissions to priority business.

Sections meeting plan

Given some distinct difficulties associated with pivoting Section meetings from an in-person format to a virtual format, management has decided that the Sections will conduct their core business in a virtual format approximately one week in advance of the HOD meeting (i.e., on or around the weekend of Nov. 5-7), regardless of the ultimate format of the HOD meeting. Additionally, if the HOD meets in-person, some Sections may choose to host additional, nonessential meeting components (e.g., education sessions, open forums, etc.) in-person in Orlando on the afternoon of Friday, Nov. 12, before the opening of the House. Section members should expect to hear from their Sections about meeting dates, times, and business.
We will keep you informed as plans develop. For clarity, all communications will have the N21 heading.

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Responses should be directed to HOD@ama-assn.org