

AMERICAN MEDICAL ASSOCIATION ORGANIZED MEDICAL STAFF SECTION

Resolution: 4
(A-26)

Introduced by: Matthew Vo, MD

Subject: Medical Bylaws Update Needs to be a Mandated Joint Commission Standard

Referred to: OMSS Reference Committee
(, MD, Chair)

1 Whereas, AMA policy encourages individual hospital medical staff to develop bylaw provisions
2 affirming the binding effect of the bylaw provisions on both the governing body and the medical
3 staff in the face of continued organization changes like mergers and acquisitions¹; and
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5 Whereas, AMA policy supports including a standard in The Joint Commission Accreditation
6 Manual for Hospitals requiring a time limit for hospital governing bodies to approve or
7 disapprove medical staff bylaw changes²; and
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9 Whereas, continued organization changes like mergers and acquisitions are making it harder for
10 the medical staff to get new bylaw changes as they require the approval of the new governing
11 body; and
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13 Whereas, some bylaw changes are being allowed selectively by a hospital governing body,
14 possibly under the guidance or direction of attorneys unfriendly to an independent medical staff;
15 and
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17 Whereas, a comprehensive bylaws document review should be done at least every three to five
18 years; unfortunately, too many medical staffs don't commit to this timeframe; therefore be it
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20 RESOLVED, that our American Medical Association will ask The Joint Commission to make
21 AMA policies H-235.991 and H-220.976 mandatory for hospital medical staff (Directive to Take
22 Action); and be it further
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24 RESOLVED, that our AMA will ask The Joint Commission to make it illegal for hospitals or
25 hospital systems to make selective bylaw changes instead of going through a proper process of
26 bylaw development that adequately safeguards a self-governing medical staff (Directive to Take
27 Action); and be it further
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29 RESOLVED, that our AMA will ask The Joint Commission to make it mandatory for hospital
30 medical staffs to have a comprehensive bylaws document review at least every three years
31 (Directive to Take Action).
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Fiscal Note: (Assigned by HOD)

Received: 4/24/2026

REFERENCES

1. AMA Policy H-235.991, "Medical Staff Bylaws." <https://policysearch.ama-assn.org/policyfinder/detail/medical%20staff%20bylaws?uri=%2FAMADoc%2FHOD.xml-0-1661.xml>.
2. AMA Policy H-220.976, "Bylaws Approval Time Limit." <https://policysearch.ama-assn.org/policyfinder/detail/medical%20staff%20bylaws?uri=%2FAMADoc%2FHOD.xml-0-1506.xml>.
3. American Medical Association. AMA physicians guide to medical staff organization bylaws. <https://www.ama-assn.org/member-groups-sections/organized-medical-staff-section-omss/ama-physicians-guide-medical-staff>
4. Bylaws best practices for today: <https://www.greeley.com/insights/bylaws-best-practices-today#:~:text=To%20ensure%20compliance%2C%20healthcare%20organizations,review%20and%20potentially%20a%20redesign>.
5. Practical Considerations for Unifying Medical Staffs https://www.wiggin.com/wp-content/uploads/2019/09/31839_practical-considerations-for-unifying-medical-staffs-clt-5-11-15-matthews-and-cooper.pdf
6. Medical Staff Issues in Hospital Mergers <https://www.wyomed.org/wp-content/uploads/2017/06/Fremont-County-Med.-Socy-Presentation-140410.pdf>

RELEVANT AMA POLICY

Medical Staff Bylaws H-235.991

Our AMA encourages individual hospital medical staffs to develop bylaw provisions affirming the binding effect of the bylaw provisions on both the governing body and the medical staff, where consistent with applicable state law. The medical staff bylaws also should contain a successor-in-interest provision to protect medical staffs from a hospital ignoring the medical staff bylaws, and establishing new medical staff bylaws to apply post-merger, acquisition, affiliation, or consolidation.

Citation: BOT Rep. M, A-84; Reaffirmed by CLRPD Rep. 3, I-94; Modified: CMS Rep. 7, I-00; Reaffirmed: CMS Rep. 6, A-10; Reaffirmed: CMS Rep. 01, A-20

Bylaws Approval Time Limit H-220.976

The AMA supports including a standard in The Joint Commission Accreditation Manual for Hospitals requiring that initial medical staff bylaws and subsequent amendments be approved or disapproved by the hospital governing body within a reasonable period of time specified in the medical staff bylaws and, if the governing body fails to act within the time specified, the proposed changes should be deemed adopted.

Citation: Sub. Res. 2, I-86; Reaffirmed: Sunset Report, I-96; Reaffirmed: CLRPD Rep. 2, A-06; Modified: CMS Rep. 01, A-16