

TMA RESOLUTION PROCESS

What is a resolution?

A resolution is a mechanism for introducing recommendations on an idea, problem, or opportunity for the Texas Medical Association (TMA) House of Delegates (HOD) to discuss, debate, and act upon for TMA.

Who can introduce a resolution?

County medical societies, TMA sections, and voting members of the HOD (including ex-officio members).

How does a resolution get introduced?

A member of a county medical society or section writes a draft of an idea, problem, or opportunity, and presents it at a county medical society meeting or section meeting. If the county medical society or section agrees, it will submit the resolution to the HOD office for consideration at the next annual session. If the county medical society or section does not agree, any delegate or HOD voting ex-officio member may submit the resolution directly for house consideration.

How do I write a resolution?

Although resolutions may deal with complex issues, most begin simply when a TMA member recognizes a problem and offers a solution. Resolutions are structured to express the background of the problem in “whereas” clauses and to recommend a specific position or action in one or more “resolved” statement(s).

TIP: To find out whether the TMA House of Delegates has previously taken action on a topic, search the TMA Audit Trail Library at www.texmed.org/TMAAuditTrailLibrary.

In addition to the “whereas” clauses and “resolved” recommendations, each resolution forwarded for consideration should include:

- A title that is brief and self-explanatory;
- The name of the individual or delegation submitting the resolution;
- Links to relevant TMA policy to facilitate independent review by delegates of pending resolutions, and, if the resolution asks for action by the American Medical Association, relevant AMA policy; and
- A listing of sources referenced within the resolution.

To search for relevant TMA policy, go to www.texmed.org/Policy/.

To search for relevant AMA policy, visit www.ama-assn.org/about/policyfinder.

Only the resolved statements of resolutions are acted upon by the house and become association policy statements or directives.

Should a resolution require funds not included in the current year’s budget, TMA staff will add a fiscal note indicating the financial implications contained in the resolution. Should a resolution pertain to medical ethics, the resolution will be referred to the Board of Councilors without debate.

Where do I submit my resolution?

Email resolutions to HOD@texmed.org.

To help draft your resolution, use TMA’s Resolution Builder at www.texmed.org/resolution/. You must still submit your resolution to HOD@texmed.org to be considered for inclusion in the Handbook. Submitted resolution will be subject to review prior to publishing to facilitate compliance with TMA conduct policies.

If you need assistance in writing or submitting a resolution, contact your county society or TMA staff.

FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

Q: What actions can a resolution call for?

A: Possible actions include:

- Adding policy to the Policy Compendium,
- Forwarding an issue to AMA,
- Lobbying a piece of legislation,
- Developing education,
- Forming a task force on the issue,
- Further study by TMA component,
- Working with regulatory agencies, or
- Implementing community initiatives.

Q: Does the HOD consider only resolutions as business?

A: No. TMA boards, councils, committees, and sections also develop ideas and recommend actions through reports (not resolutions) to the HOD.

Q: Can I write a resolution on any topic?

A: The resolution, and its recommendation(s), can be related to any topic that directly involves the practice of medicine, and physicians in particular. **A good rule of thumb is to focus on what role physicians can play in addressing the issue.**

Q: Will I have the opportunity to speak on my resolution?

A: All TMA members can testify on any resolution, including their own, during the annual session of the TMA House of Delegates during open online testimony (www.texmed.org/testimony) and at reference committee hearings held the Friday morning of the meeting. Members of the house also may extract an item for debate before the house at the Saturday session of the House of Delegates.

When providing testimony before a reference committee or the house, be sure to cite: (1) your name, (2) whom you represent, (3) whether you have any conflicts, and (4) your position on the item.

Q: What if I need to make an amendment to my resolution after I have submitted it?

A: Proposed amendments can be presented as testimony once online testimony has opened, or during the reference committee hearing at TexMed. Amendments also may be offered on the floor during the Saturday session, if the item is extracted for debate and is not recommended for referral. If the reference committee has recommended the item for referral, a motion to defeat referral must be approved before amendments can be accepted.

Q: If my resolution is referred, does that mean nothing will come of it?

A: Only an approved recommendation to “not adopt” will halt a resolution. Resolutions that have been referred will move to a TMA board, council, or committee for study and a report back to the house. This ensures TMA will take a close look at the issue to determine possible action.

Q: How can I follow the course of my resolution once it is voted on by the House of Delegates?

A: View the following documents on the House of Delegates webpage at www.texmed.org/HOD:

1. **Summary of Actions:** A record of how the house voted on each item of business (adopted, adopted with amendments, not adopted, or referred).
2. **Audit Trail:** A tracking document for action items adopted or referred by the house. This includes which component(s) will be responsible for the item. A status report on each item will be added to this document and submitted to the house at the next annual session.

SAMPLE RESOLUTION

TEXAS MEDICAL ASSOCIATION HOUSE OF DELEGATES

Resolution ## 20XX

Subject: Health Savings Accounts for Medicare Beneficiaries
Introduced by: Tarrant County Medical Society
Referred to: (Speaker and vice speaker will refer to a reference committee)

Whereas, Medicare beneficiaries have large deductibles and copayments; and

Whereas, Medicare often does not pay for medical expenses for uncovered medications, durable medical equipment, or services; and

Whereas, Medicare funding is likely to be reduced by trillions of dollars over the next two decades; and

Whereas, Medicare beneficiaries face large and increasing medical expenses that Medicare will not pay; therefore be it

RESOLVED, That the Texas Medical Association adopt as policy that Medicare beneficiaries be permitted to make tax-free contributions to health savings accounts; and be it further

RESOLVED, That TMA urge Congress to make changes in federal laws permitting Medicare beneficiaries to make tax-free contributions to health savings accounts; and be it further

RESOLVED, That our Texas Delegation to the American Medical Association take this resolution to the AMA House of Delegates for consideration.

Relevant TMA Policy:

[120.001 Health Care Reform](#)

Relevant AMA Policy:

[H-330.912 Appropriate Medical Coverage for Medicare Beneficiaries](#)

Sources:

Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services. www.cms.gov. Accessed 3/30/22.

RESOLUTION WRITING AND TESTIMONY BEST PRACTICES

We asked past members of TMA reference committees what they look for in a resolution. What makes them advocate for or against adoption? What is a common thread found in compelling testimony? These are some of their responses.

Resolution Writing:

- Ensure your goals are feasible, practical, and able to be implemented by TMA or AMA.
- Limit the scope of the resolution to a single understandable point. Complex resolutions that try to solve multiple issues get messy and leave you open to support on one point and opposition on other points.
- Try to write the resolves as quick, one-thought sound bites or bullet points.
- For accurate messaging, try to stick to no more than three to five “whereases.”
- Cut as many words as possible. Let someone else read your resolution and cut mercilessly to only the most memorable lines.
- Vet your resolution rigorously through a robust review process at local levels.
- Think of your stakeholders: Who might be for or against your resolution? Then reach out to both parties – and your TMA leaders – for feedback.
- Research existing policy. You may want to amend existing policy rather than creating a new one.
- Have solid evidence from existing literature.
- Start early and be patient with the process. If you get delayed because of inadequate preparation, revise your resolution for the next meeting rather than submitting a rough draft too early.
- Be flexible and open to amendments as appropriate.

Testimony:

- Submit online testimony during the open testimony period. Your reference committees want to see support for the resolution. It is difficult to fully explore the pros and cons of a resolution during the short time it is being considered by reference committees and the house. If the resolution doesn’t have any recorded support, I often advocate to not approve or refer since the impact of the resolution may not have been fully considered.
- Reach out to your county or specialty society to testify in favor as well. Broad support is key.
- Limit your testimony to pithy sound bites.
- Speak slowly.
- Do not use the entire two minutes reading as many words as you can.