



Physicians Caring for Texans

HOW THE HOUSE OF DELEGATES FUNCTIONS

Composition

The policymaking body of the Texas Medical Association is its House of Delegates. Membership in the house consists of county society delegates and voting ex officio members. There are more than 510 voting members of the house. It meets during TexMed in the spring of each year and can meet in special session if called by the TMA president or by petition of at least 30 delegates.

Representation

County society delegates, representing the grassroots of medicine, are elected by their respective county societies. The state is divided into 110 county medical societies, which in turn are divided into 15 councilor districts. Counties are entitled to one delegate for the first 100 members or less, and one additional delegate for each additional 100 members or fraction thereof. County society delegate representation size ranges from one delegate (the smaller societies) to our largest delegation of more than 90. Caucus meetings are held to review reference committee reports and to decide how house members from each caucus should vote. Bexar, Collin-Fannin, Dallas, Harris, Tarrant, and Travis delegations caucus separately, while counties with one to 10 delegates meet together as the Lone Star Caucus.

Business Items

Business before the House of Delegates originates from association boards, councils, committees, and sections. These groups prepare reports of their activities and recommendations, which are published in *Handbook for Delegates*. In addition, county medical societies, individual delegates, and sections may submit resolutions for publication in the handbook. The handbook is posted online approximately one month before each meeting at texmed.org/HOD. Members may request a written copy by emailing hod@texmed.org.

Reference Committees

Reports with recommendations and resolutions are referred to reference committees and are discussed thoroughly during open hearings. Reference committees consist of geographically chosen members of the House of Delegates and represent a variety of specialties. Reference committees are appointed for one session by the speaker of the House of Delegates. Any member of the association may attend and testify before a reference committee.

Setting Policy

Each time a vote is taken, delegates have pointed the association in a certain direction and have established association policy. Some policies call for immediate action — such as opposing a particular bill in the legislature. Other policies have a *long-term* effect — such as opposing state mandates dictating specific patient-physician communication without endorsement of the appropriate professional medical organization. Recommendations for *long-term* association policy are maintained in a policy compendium. When a policy is 10 years old, it is referred to the appropriate TMA board, council, or committee to review for recommendation to delete, revise, or retain the policy. The compendium is updated following each House of Delegates session to reflect these changes and is available on the TMA website at www.texmed.org/Policy.