

## **Make A Difference: Write That Council Resolution**

ACEP is a living entity, which needs new ideas to keep it healthy and viable in the 21st century. Many College members introduce new ideas and current issues to ACEP through Council resolutions. This may sound daunting to our newer members, but the good news is that only takes two ACEP members to submit a resolution for Council consideration. In just a few months the ACEP Council will meet and consider numerous resolutions.

ACEP's Council, the major governing body for the College, considers resolutions annually in conjunction with *Scientific Assembly*. During this annual meeting, the Council considers many resolutions, ranging from College regulations to major policy initiatives thus directing fund allocation. For 2012, the Council has 350 Councillors: ACEP members representing chapters, sections, AACEM, CORD, EMRA, and SAEM.

This Council meeting is your opportunity to make a resounding impact by setting our agenda for the coming years. Topics such as the direct election of the president-elect, or working with the Emergency Nurses' Association on staffing models, grew directly from member resolutions submitted to the Council. If you have a hot topic that you believe the College should address, now is the time to start writing that resolution.

### **I'm ready to write my resolution**

Resolutions consist of a descriptive Title, a Whereas section, and finally, the Resolved section. The Council only considers the Resolved when it votes, and the Resolved is what the Board of Directors reviews to direct College resources. The Whereas section is the background, and explains the logic of your Resolved. This should be short, focus on the facts, and include any available statistics. The Resolved section should be direct and include recommended action, such as a new policy or action by the College.

There are two types of resolutions: general resolutions and Bylaws resolutions. General resolutions require a simple majority vote to pass, while Bylaws resolutions require a two-thirds majority. When writing Bylaws resolutions, list the Article number, and Section from the Bylaws you wish to alter. Then, in the resolution, you should show the current language, and bold your suggested new language while striking through the suggested edits. See the ACEP Web site article, "Guidelines for Writing Resolutions," which further details the process and offers tips on writing a resolution.

### **I want to submit my resolution**

It takes at least two members to submit a resolution, or a Chapter, Section, AACEM, CORD, or EMRA may submit a resolution. If the resolution comes from a Chapter or Section, then a letter of support from the President of the Chapter or Chair of the Section is required. The Board of Directors or an ACEP committee can also submit a resolution. The Board of Directors must review any resolution from an ACEP committee, and usually reviews all drafts at their June meeting. Bylaws resolutions pass through the Bylaws committee for review and suggested changes. These changes and suggestions are referred back to the author of the resolution for consideration. One may submit a resolution by mail, fax, or email. Resolutions are due at least 90 days before the Council meeting. This year the deadline is July 9, 2012.

### **Debating the resolution**

Councillors receive the resolutions prior to the annual meeting along with background information from ACEP staff. Discussion often occurs on the Council electronic list serve prior to the Council meeting. At the discretion of the Speaker, non-Councillor resolution authors may be added to the Council e-list serve upon request.

At the Council meeting, the Speaker and Vice-Speaker divide the resolutions into four reference committees. The reference committees meet and hear testimony on each resolution. You, as the author of your resolution, should attend the reference committee that discusses your resolution. Reference committees allow for open debate and unlimited testimony, and participants often have questions best answered by the author. Afterwards, the reference committee summarizes the debate and makes a recommendation to the Council.

The Council then meets to discuss all the resolutions. Each reference committee presents each resolution, providing a recommendation and summary of the debate to the Council in writing and on the podium, and then the Council debates each resolution. Any ACEP member may sit in the back and listen to the Council debate whether a Councillor or not. If you wish to speak directly to the Council, you may request to do so in writing to the Speaker before the debate. Include your name, organization affiliation, issue to address, and the rationale for speaking to the Council. Alternatively, you may ask your Chapter or Section for alternate Councillor status and permission for Council floor access during debate. Chapters and Sections often have alternate Councillor slots and encourage the extra participation.

The Council's options are: **Adopt** the resolution as written; **Adopt as Amended** by the Council; **Refer** to the Board, the Council Steering Committee, or the Bylaws Interpretation Committee; **Not Adopt** (defeat or reject) the resolution; or **Postpone**.

### **Hints from Successful Resolution Authors**

- Present your resolution prior to submission to your Chapter or Section for sponsorship on the Council floor. This way, they can give advice and assistance.
- Consider the practical applications of your resolution. A well-written resolution that speaks to an important issue in a practical way passes through the Council much more easily.
- Do a little homework before submitting your resolution. The ACEP web site is a great place to start. Does ACEP already have a policy on this topic? Has the Council considered this before? What happened?
- Find and contact the other stakeholders for your topic. They have valuable insight and expertise. Those stakeholders may co-sponsor your resolution.
- Attend debate concerning your resolution in both reference committee and before the Council. If you cannot attend, prepare another ACEP member to represent you.

### **I need more resources**

Go to ACEP's Web site, [www.acep.org](http://www.acep.org). Click on "About Us," then "Leadership," and finally click on "Council." Scroll down and you will see a link to the "Guidelines for Writing Resolutions" article. All authors should review this article prior to writing their resolution. Additionally, there is information about the Council Standing Rules, Council committees, and Councillor/Alternate Councillor position descriptions. Of special note, there is a link to Actions on Council Resolutions. Under this link are PDF documents dating back to 1998 summarizing each resolution and what has occurred with each of them. You can review past actions, or keep track of what happens once your resolution passes.

### **Well, get to it**

Writing and submitting Council resolutions keeps our College healthy and vital. A Council resolution is a great way for College members to speak to the leaders of the College and the Board of Directors. Even if your resolution does not pass, the College will debate the topic and consider its ramifications. Additionally, other members may have resources or suggestions to address your issue. I encourage you to take advantage of this opportunity and exercise your rights as part of our Emergency Medicine community. Dare to make a difference by submitting a resolution to the ACEP Council.