

AMA HOUSE OF DELEGATES APCR DELEGATE'S REPORT JUNE 7, 2020

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Due to COVID-19, the 2020 American Medical Association (AMA) Annual Meeting was replaced with a four-hour video conference. The agenda was limited to essential business including election of officers and consideration of policies scheduled to sunset. Related to pharmaceuticals, the House of Delegates reaffirmed support for AMA's continuing role in the USAN Council, for pain control and research based on current scientific evidence, and for appropriate stockpiling of medications for acute and chronic medical conditions in a disaster or other serious emergency. As of July 11, 2020, the Proceedings of the meeting are online at <https://www.ama-assn.org/house-delegates/special-meeting/proceedings-2020-special-meeting-house-delegates>. Final actions on each item are available as part of the annotated Reference Committee reports, which can be seen by going to this website and clicking on "The report of Reference Committee F and Amendments to Constitution & Bylaws". Several major medical specialty societies announced COVID-19 related cancellations of upcoming meetings.

INTRODUCTION

The 2020 Annual Meeting of the American Medical Association (AMA) was suspended due to the ongoing SARS-CoV-2 (COVID-19) pandemic. In lieu of the usual five-day Annual Meeting, the House of Delegates (HOD) convened virtually for one afternoon on Sunday, June 7, 2020 for a Special Meeting to consider essential business, namely items to fulfill bylaws requirements or maintain the integrity of the AMA's policy positions. Remarkably, 612 out of 686 delegates (89.2%) had been accredited and were participating online when the meeting began. Additional delegates continued to join the meeting as it progressed.

AMA POLICIES

When the HOD adopts policies, it sets a maximum ten-year time horizon for those policies. A policy will typically sunset after ten years unless action is taken by the HOD to retain it. Several policies regarding pharmaceuticals and medical devices were reviewed at this meeting:

- Policy regarding "The Decade of Pain Control and Research" was rescinded. The AMA has more recent policy that disagrees with some of the underpinnings of this initiative. The more recent policy, "Pain as the Fifth Vital Sign" advocates for removal of pain as a vital sign from Joint

Commission standards. More recent policies support pain control and research based on current scientific evidence.

- Policy regarding “Supporting Safe Medical Products as a Priority Public Health Initiative” was retained. Specifically, “AMA will work through the United States Adopted Names (USAN) Council to adopt methodology to help prevent look alike-sound alike errors in giving new drugs generic names.”
- Policy regarding “Internet Prescriptions” was rescinded because its objective had been accomplished. AMA evaluated federal Internet prescribing legislation and advocated AMA policy to members of Congress. H.R. 6353, the Ryan Haight Online Pharmacy Consumer Protection Act of 2008, was enacted in October 2008 and provides for strong penalties for the inappropriate provision of prescription medication on the Internet.
- Policy regarding “Personal Medication and Medical Supplies in Times of Disaster” was modified to read, “Our AMA urges continued dialogue with the appropriate federal agencies, medical societies, health care organizations, and other appropriate stakeholders to: (a) ensure timely distribution of and access to medications for acute and chronic medical conditions in a disaster; (b) issue guidance to health professionals and the public on the appropriate stockpiling of medications for acute and chronic medical conditions in a disaster or other serious emergency; and (c) deliberate the design, feasibility, and utility of a universal mechanism, that provides the essential health and medical supplies and information that can assist emergency medical responders and other health care personnel with the provision of medical care and assistance in a disaster or other serious emergency.”

TOGETHER WE ARE STRONGER

AMA Executive Vice President James L. Madera, MD presented AMA’s 2019 Annual Report (<https://www.ama-assn.org/system/files/2020-04/2019-annual-report.pdf>). Membership was up for the 9th consecutive year. Revenues increased from \$361.3 million in 2018 to \$392.3 million in 2019. The number of employees increased from 1,087 to 1,146.

During the meeting, two new organizations, the American Society of Nuclear Cardiology and the Society of Cardiovascular Computed Tomography, were approved for national medical specialty organization representation in the HOD.

Among more than 120 national medical specialty societies (and more than 50 state and territorial medical societies) represented in the AMA House of Delegates our Academy of Physicians in Clinical Research (APCR) remains the only one for which pharmaceutical and medical device research is the primary focus.

AMA last raised its dues in 1994. Physicians in residency training pay \$45 annually. Traditionally, when physicians entered practice, dues increased to the regular \$420 rate with discounts during the first two years. At this meeting, the HOD voted to expand the period of discounts to four years.

CHANGE OF WATCH

In her final address as AMA President for 2019-20, psychiatrist Patrice Harris, MD, MA, AMA's first African American female President highlighted AMA's COVID-19 related work:

“On an organizational level, our AMA has pressured Congress and the administration to accelerate production of PPE, test kits and ventilators. We have lobbied for regulatory changes to facilitate remote patient visits and fought for financial support for independent and small practices. We have fought for freedom of speech so physicians can raise concerns about the lack of resources without fear of retribution or punishment. We have used our national platform to call on leaders to focus on science and evidence in all decision making. And it is those acts of competence, truth-telling, compassion, and purpose that will ultimately lead us through this pandemic.”

With her inaugural address as AMA President for 2020-21, allergist Sue Bailey, MD, became AMA's 175th President and the third woman in a row to serve as AMA President. Her speech emphasized the importance of advocacy:

“I believe involvement in organized medicine is a professional obligation. Taking good care of our patients requires much more from us than just the time we spend with them in an exam room. It requires advocacy at the highest levels to fight against the quagmire of regulation and for the support we need to sustain private practice during a pandemic that is threatening its very survival. It requires us to confront insurance companies and all their familiar tricks that seem to raise insurance premiums year after year without spending a dime more on patient care.”

At this meeting, retired Air Force Major General Gerald Harmon, MD, was chosen as AMA President-Elect. Dr. Harmon and I are both fellows of the American Academy of Family Physicians (AAFP). The AAFP delegation is the largest specialty delegation in the HOD and they always invite all AAFP members representing other societies to attend their social events. This year's virtual meeting meant missing these important opportunities to join in celebration and discuss our mutual objectives.

JAMA NETWORK OPEN

JAMA Network Open[™], AMA's open-access journal is now one year old. The journal is intended to be an international platform for investigators around the world, moving away from the U.S.-centric focus of many journals. Content is available without charge to both AMA members and nonmembers. Authors can login and submit manuscripts using their ORCID accounts (<https://orcid.org>).

PERSONAL NOTES

It is always a great honor to represent the Academy of Physicians in Clinical Research in the AMA House of Delegates.

Last month I presided at the first ever virtual meeting of the AMA hosted United States Adopted Names (USAN) Council (<https://www.ama-assn.org/about/united-states-adopted-names/usan-council>). The USAN Council assigns the nonproprietary (generic) names for the active ingredients in all drugs marketed in the US. US pharmaceutical research is responsible for almost half of the new pharmaceutical ingredients marketed anywhere in the world. AMA cosponsors the USAN Council along with the US Pharmacopeia (USP) and the American Pharmacists Association (APhA). The FDA has a liaison member. Former APCR Board of Trustees member Judith Jones and I are the only two physicians among the five Council members. I was elected Chairman of the USAN Council in January 2012 (https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/United_States_Adopted_Name).

At the AMA, APCR is a member of the Section Council on Preventive Medicine (SCPM). Other SCPM members include the Aerospace Medical Association, the American Association of Public Health Physicians, the American College of Occupational and Environmental Medicine, the American College of Preventive Medicine, the American Academy of Insurance Medicine, the American College of Medical Quality, the Society of Addiction Medicine, and the Association of State and Territorial Health Officials. Representatives of the US military services, the US Public Health Service and the US Department of Veterans Affairs also attend our Section Council meetings.

The AMA Delegation from MedChi – The Maryland State Medical Society provides important backup and logistic support for Maryland based delegates including myself at HOD meetings. At this meeting, Maryland based internists Willarda Edwards and Ilse Levin won seats on the AMA Board of Trustees. I am a life member of MedChi and I have represented MedChi in the US Pharmacopeial Convention since 2008 and most recently at the June 2020 virtual USP Convention Meeting (<https://www.usp.org/about/usp-2020-convention>).

CONCLUSION

AMA has experienced nine straight years of membership growth and is becoming increasingly important in creating the future of medicine. At most of its meetings, Issues relating to drug research, development, availability, pricing, and promotion are a focus for the House of Delegates (HOD). Within the HOD, APCR is the only voice focused on clinical research.

Please feel free to call upon me if I can answer any questions - Thanks!

Peter

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