

**PROCEDURES FOR COMPONENT STATE DELEGATIONS
TO HOUSE OF DELEGATES**

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Date the HOD Begin	1946
Date of Adoption:	January 1980
Date of Last Review:	August 2002
Date of Last Revision:	September, 2003
Date of Last Revision:	June, 2009

Distribution: State Leader and House of Delegates CoP

I. OBJECTIVES

- 1.0 To centralize the available policies and procedures as they affect delegate service to the House of Delegates.
- 1.1 To provide assistance to component state association presidents in preparing delegates to take office.

II. ELECTION OF DELEGATES

2.0 Policies:

- 2.0.0 **General.** The number of delegates a state association is entitled to seat in the AHIMA House of Delegates is based on the Active membership in the state association on record in the AHIMA Office at the close of business on December 31 of the immediate prior year. (Bylaws: Article V, Section 7.A)
- 2.0.1. **Apportionment.** Each component state association is entitled to 1 delegate for any portion of 100 Active members and shall be entitled to 1 additional delegate for each additional 100 active members or major portion thereof. No state shall be entitled to more than 5 delegates. (Bylaws: Article V, Section 7.A)
- 2.0.2 **Eligibility.** Delegates must be active members of AHIMA. Component state association delegates must be Active members of the state association they will represent. (Paraphrased from the Bylaws: Article V, Section 7 and Article XII, Section 5)
- 2.0.3 Members of the AHIMA Board of Directors shall not serve as delegates from component state associations.
- 2.0.4 **Terms of Office.** In states with two or more delegates, the term of delegates shall be two years. Terms of two or more delegates shall be staggered to maintain continuity in the House of Delegates and in component state delegations. In states with only one delegate, the term of office may be one or two years as determined by the CSA. Component State Associations shall make provisions for filling delegate vacancies. (Bylaws: Article V, Section 7.B)

2.1 Procedures:

- 2.1.0 The state president or designee should obtain the latest state membership count from the AHIMA Office prior to the nominating committee solicitation of candidates for the state ballot. It is wise to estimate the size of the state membership by December 31 of the appropriate year based on the growth pattern for the state.

It is vitally important to elect a sufficient number of delegates and alternatives to allow for increases in state membership and to provide for those occasions when a delegate is unable to serve, thus necessitating the use of an alternate delegate.

- 2.1.1 State bylaws should address the manner of filling vacancies that occur in the state's duly elected delegation. It is strongly recommended that election of all delegates, including alternates, be by the state's general membership and that appointment of a person to serve as a delegate by an elected body, such as the state's board, be resorted to only as a last measure.

- 2.1.2 Delegates must be Active members of AHIMA, both at the time of election and at the time of service. The state president has the responsibility to ensure the delegates' initial and ongoing eligibility.

Although AHIMA has no stated policy about delegate qualifications, each component state association is expected to set qualifications for their delegates and to communicate these to the state nominating committee for use in selecting candidates for delegate positions. **See Delegate Job Description**

Delegate Job Description

Core Elements

The following core elements were developed for CSAs to incorporate into delegate position descriptions. The position description was updated in 2009 to include information about the House of Delegate (HOD) performance measures and HOD Teams. AHIMA's House of Delegates conducts business both virtually and in-person on a year-round basis. Delegates should be prepared to participate in these activities as they occur throughout the year.

Qualifications

- Active member of AHIMA and CSA
- Experienced in HIM
- Demonstrated leadership
- Access to phone, e-mail and the Internet

Desired Attributes

- Understanding of AHIMA, the profession and the industry
- Possesses critical and strategic thinking skills
- Engages with members
- Communicates well
- Presents a professional image and has high ethical standards

Role

- Advocates for the profession, the members, and the Association
- Gains knowledge on issues
- Communicates and negotiates issues
- As outlined in the Bylaws:
 - Approves the standard governing the profession
 - Elects the members of the AHIMA Nominating Committee, except the Chairman and appointed members
 - Advises the Board of Directors in the development and modification of Association plans
 - Levies special assessments
 - Approves members' continuing education fees
 - Approves AHIMA Bylaws amendments
 - Approves standing rules of the House of Delegates
 - Approves resolutions

Activities

- Participates in the virtual, year-round House of Delegates as activities occurs and business is conducted
- Attends House of Delegates Meetings
- Votes on HOD action items in-person and electronically throughout the year
- Visits and participates in the State Leaders and HOD Community of Practice (CoP) at least weekly
- Participates in scheduled delegated educational sessions, CHATS, conference calls, surveys and evaluations, etc.
- Coordinates with CSA leadership on the assignment of an alternate delegate when participation in HOD activity is not possible
- One or more delegates per CSA attend Team Talks and Leadership Conference and shares information with other CSA delegates
- Attends CSA and/or local member and Board meetings
- Actively seeks feedback from CSA members on issues, proposals and Action Items
- Informs CSA membership on AHIMA and HOD activities

- Actively participates in assigned HOD Team (refer to the following section, Role of HOD Team Member)

Role of HOD Team Member*

As a member of the House of Delegates, you are assigned to one of six HOD Teams. Collectively, these Teams work to advance the strategy of AHIMA and provide an ideal forum for delegate discussion, debate and problem solving. Each HOD Team operates under specific charges set forth by the Board of Directors. Your active participation on the HOD Team is vital to the success of the HOD Team and achievement of the charges. You will engage with all HOD Team members including the co-chairs and staff liaison.

Qualifications and Attributes

- Possess experience, expertise or interest related to the work of the HOD Team
- Interest in advancing the HIM profession and AHIMA
- Access to phone, e-mail and the Internet

Responsibilities

- Attend at least 50% of scheduled meetings and/or conference calls
- Respond to communications in a timely manner
- Participate in the private HOD Team CoP
- Prepare for discussions by reading meeting materials, anticipate questions and answers
- Accept assignments and adhere to deadlines
- Actively share information and provide feedback and/or recommendations
- Support HOD Team decisions
- Follows meeting Ground Rules and direction from the HOD Team co-chairs

Resources

- HOD Team Charges
- AHIMA Strategy Map
- AHIMA Body of Knowledge (BoK)
 - AHIMA Bylaws
 - AHIMA Code of Ethics
 - AHIMA HOD Resolutions
- Private HOD Team CoP and access to all private, HOD Team CoPs

*Adapted from AHIMA's Role of Members in Volunteer Groups, Last Revised: January 8, 2008

III. DELEGATE CERTIFICATION

3.0 Policies:

3.0.0 **Certification.** Delegates' names, preferred mailing address, e-mail address and credentialing status MUST be filed in the AHIMA Office by the stipulated filing date each year. The names of all duly elected alternates are to be included on this official list.

3.0.1 **Delegation Composition.** Members of the AHIMA Board of Directors and state delegations meeting the provisions of the Bylaws shall be seated in the House of Delegates.

3.1 Procedures:

3.1.0 The state president should review with the state leadership early in the term of office the status of the state bylaws with regard to changes mandated by the AHIMA House of Delegates. Arrangements should then be made to amend the state bylaws so that conformity with AHIMA is achieved.

3.1.1. The state president should contact all second-year delegates and all newly elected delegates by February 1 of each year to determine their intent and ability to serve in the House of Delegates that year.

The state president or designee should confirm the status of all delegates prior to February 1 of each year.

It is important to note that persons who may be elected during the state's election process and subsequently move out of state are no longer eligible to serve as delegates from that state. (This does not apply to individuals who meet the requirements for state membership as outlined in the ahima bylaws article xii, section 1.a) the state president is obligated to inform delegates in these instances of their loss of delegate status.

3.1.2 The state president should arrange to fill any vacancies in state delegation by contacting and obtaining a commitment from the first eligible alternate delegate continuing in the same fashion until the delegation is at full strength.

IV. PREPARATION OF DELEGATES

4.0 Guidelines:

4.0.0 **General.** Component state associations are encouraged to develop guidelines to aid delegates in the performance of their duties.

4.0.1 **Information Exchanges.** Component state associations are expected to circulate materials or association issues and activities during the year as the information becomes available. State association should, to the greatest extent possible, provide opportunities for information exchange between the delegates and their constituency prior to the meeting of the House of Delegates.

4.0.2 **Reporting.** It is expected that the delegates will report back to their constituency the salient happenings in the House of Delegates.

4.1 Procedures:

4.1.0 Some states have found it useful to develop procedure manuals for their delegates. These manuals are provided to the delegates upon their election and are designed to clarify for the delegate his/her responsibilities and the component state association's responsibilities to the delegate. Such matters as delegate reimbursement can be contained in this manual.

4.1.1 State presidents are encouraged to share information coming from AHIMA with the delegates throughout the year.

4.1.2 The convening of state delegates after access to provided information is recommended since it can offer the opportunity to discuss and clarify issues and determine strategy where appropriate.

4.1.3 Delegates should be informed of the state association's thoughts on current issues. This can be accomplished in various ways: e.g., membership polls, special state membership meetings, Communities of Practice, Website, etc. Delegates are expected to act on behalf of the whole, basing decisions on knowledge and dialogue. Discussion with members of their state is one way to gain perspective, but so is discussion with members of other states, with fellow delegates, with members of the board, with respected leaders. Member input is important, but so is the environmental scan, healthcare trends, workforce trends, data, etc. Not only what is known to be true in the past and the present, but the profession 5 and 10 years into the future.

4.1.4 Each state will wish to establish its own requirements for reporting of the activities of the House of Delegates to the state members. Although a formal reporting of the business of the House of Delegates appears in the December issue of the *Journal of the American Health Information Management Association*, a detailed reporting to include how the state voted on the major issues is suggested.

V. VOTING PROCESS

5.1.1 Requirements

AHIMA Bylaws, the House of Delegates Standing Rules, parliamentary procedure and Roberts Rules of Order guide the voting process. The bylaws outline such items as the scope of authority of the House of Delegates, eligible voters, the quorum and use of parliamentary procedure. Maintaining order in meetings is essential, to conduct business fairly, orderly and that all delegates can be heard. The Standing Rules of the House of Delegates and Article V. House of Delegates have been included at the end of this document.

5.1.2 Notice

Basic decision making procedures require the provision of adequate notice of an action item. This allows delegates to read materials, research the topic and communicate with members. The AHIMA Bylaws outline the required notice in Article V, Section 9:

“Prior notice consists of written notice by a member of the House of Delegates or by a Component State Association to all members of the House of Delegates, provided at least 30 days prior to the meeting of the House of Delegates. In the event new business is presented to the House of Delegates without prior notice, the affirmative vote of ninety percent of the House of Delegates shall be required to pass new business. The term “new business” does not include proposed Bylaw amendments.”

The shorter the notice, the higher the percent in the affirmative to approve the motion.

5.1.3 Discussion and Changes/Amendments

The discussion portion of the process is for delegates to ask questions, share opinions and information, and garner support for their side of the issue. When the House is “in session” either in a meeting or in an electronic discussion delegates should always:

- address the Chair of the House, the communications are being directed to the Chair
- indicate if you are speaking on behalf of yourself, your state or otherwise
- state if you are speaking for or against the proposed item
- do not repeat information already stated

In the Standing Rules 2.0.4 and 2.0.5:

“When meeting face-to-face; debate shall be limited to two minutes for each speaker. Debate shall be limited to 20 minutes per topic. When meeting electronically; debate shall be limited to 150 words per electronic communication and the timeframe for discussion will be determined before the start of discussion.” (This is typically at least 48 hours in the State Leader and HOD community threaded discussion and it is best to keep the number of threads for a specific discussion to a minimum)

“When meeting face-to-face; a delegate or member may not speak a second time on the same question if another who has not spoken asks for the floor, and no delegate or member shall speak more than twice on the same questions unless the House of Delegates grants permission by a two-thirds vote. When meeting electronically; any limitations will be outlined by the Chair prior to electronic discussion.”

During discussion, delegates may suggest changes to the materials or in the case of a motion, delegates can request to amend, postpone, refer the motion to committee, etc. This process is based on the AHIMA Bylaws and Roberts Rules of Order. A diagram of Roberts Rules can be found under a separate document titled "Parliamentary Motions Guide". Delegates may contact the Volunteer Services Team at AHIMA to officially propose a change or amendment. Staff will facilitate the communications. Delegates making the proposal may be convened to review multiple changes or amendments submitted to facilitate a compromise. In the case that a compromise cannot be reached, a group of delegates selected by state alpha order will work to bring forward a compromise.

Delegate Code of Conduct:

- a) Respect for diversity and differences should be observed in all discussions and deliberations. During disagreement or expression of opposite opinions, clearly state your issue and avoid any negative personal references. In all electronic discussion, the CoP "Terms and Conditions of Use" will be observed including the member's obligation to "act in a professional manner and refrain from inappropriate language, defamation, or slander of an individual or company, and act in a manner open and tolerant of other's opinions". Violations of the "Terms" could result in removal from the CoP.
- b) Questions or comments directed to an individual or delegate, should be done privately and separate from the group discussion. Either at a break, caucus or in a separate e-mail message.
- c) Delegates should act on behalf of the whole, basing decisions on knowledge and discussion: with members of their state is one way to gain perspective; members of other states; with fellow delegates; with members of the board; and with respected opinion leaders. Environmental scans, healthcare trends, workforce trends, and related data should be considered in the decision making process.

5.1.4 Alternate Delegates

If a delegate cannot attend a meeting or participate in an electronic vote, an alternate can be appointed in coordination with the CSA leadership. The delegate is to contact the lead delegate of the state. After an alternate is appointed, the lead delegate informs the AHIMA staff of the alternate and shares materials with the alternate delegate.

5.1.5 Voting Period

During the meeting or the electronic voting period, delegates cast their vote. It is critical that delegates take all information and opinion into consideration and act on behalf of the Association, the profession and the whole membership. The number of votes required to pass a vote are listed in the AHIMA Bylaws, Section 8 and 9 and in Roberts Rules of Order (included at the end of this document):

“The affirmative vote of a majority of the delegates present and voting shall be necessary for the adoption of any matter unless otherwise required by law or in these Bylaws.”

“ The affirmative vote of two-thirds of the delegates present and voting shall be required to consider new business. An affirmative vote by a majority of the delegates present and voting shall be required to pass new business with prior notice.”

During electronic vote, typically 14 days is the length of time for the voting period with two reminders being sent to delegates that have not submitted a vote at the time of the reminder. If a delegate has difficulty opening the electronic ballot, an e-mail or fax will be accepted within the voting period. The e-mail or fax should include the delegate name, member ID number and vote. Four days prior to the close of the voting period, CSA presidents will be notified of delegates who have not yet voted.

5.1.6 Announcement of results

At the close of the voting, the vote is verified and tallied. The quorum is stated in the AHIMA Bylaws, Section 8:

“Delegate representation from at least one-third of the Component State Associations shall constitute a quorum for the House of Delegates. The affirmative vote of a majority of the delegates present and voting shall be necessary for the adoption of any matter unless otherwise required by law or in these Bylaws.”

Only after the voting period will the outcome be announced to the House of Delegates first, then the AHIMA membership through routine communications. When available, the voting records of delegates by state will be released at the time the outcome is announced to maintain a fair and unbiased vote. Delegates should communicate the outcome and rationale to their states and answer questions about decisions made.