

Resolution Writing Guide

I. Purpose of this guide

This guide contains a reference for writing and submitting a resolution to be heard at the House of Delegates (HOD).

Resolutions are essentially proposals for a policy position that you think the MDA should support. Well written resolutions have a purpose that is readily understood. Clarity of purpose enhances the prospects for a resolution being adopted at the HOD.

The timeline to bring a resolution forward is very clear. The deadlines afford time for numerous tasks. Resolutions undergo a legal review by legal counsel, review by the Board of Trustees to determine how the resolution meshes with the established MDA vision, a fiscal impact study, constructive critique by the Resolution Review Committee and dissemination of the resolution to the delegates.

Resolutions are of vital importance because they become part of the official policy which guides the MDA. Positions and policies of the MDA are intended to reflect the opinions of the membership and resolutions are at the heart of how these policies are determined. The Board of Trustees uses the resolutions passed by the HOD as a directive and compass for the actions they will take.

II. Parts of a Resolution

The format of a resolution is not as complicated as it may seem. The two most important parts of a resolution are the Background Statement and the Resolving Clause(s). After being submitted each resolution will also have a resolution number, title, fiscal impact statement, strategic plan category (if any) and information about who is submitting the resolution. *See attached Example Resolution Form.*

III. Drafting and Submitting a Resolution

All resolutions should be submitted on the MDA Resolution Submission Form which can be found on the MDA website. Certain parts of a resolution are completed by MDA staff. Those sections include the Resolution Number, Fiscal Impact, strategic plan category. If you are having difficulty completing or submitting the form please contact the MDA.

Who can submit a resolution

A resolution can be submitted by any of the following: an MDA district, An MDA committee, the MDA Board of Trustees (BOT), or a delegate to the MDA House of Delegates.

Resolutions submitted by MDA committees, or the MDA Board of Trustees must ensure that the resolution is an official act of its body.

Resolutions submitted by MDA districts must be an official action of the districts governing body e.g. the districts executive council or, if the districts permit, the district's caucus.

If you are not a delegate or involved at the district or committee level and would still like to submit a Resolution you may ask your District Officers, a committee with a subject similar to your resolution, or a delegate to submit your Resolution. The MDA staff can provide you contact information for your District, committees, and delegates.

Background statement(s) - The Whereas clause(s)

The Background statement(s) is the supporting statement which provides information as to why the resolution is being proposed. The Whereas clause(s) should paint a picture of why the topic should be addressed by the MDA. Whereas clauses can describe the problem that the Resolve clause is intended to address, explain how the Resolving clause will correct the problem, or otherwise defend or support the Resolving clause in any other way.

It is important to note that Whereas clauses will not be voted upon or included in the adopted resolution. Once a resolution is disposed of the Whereas clauses are no longer available.

Whereas clauses should flow in a logical order.

Statements of fact should be cited with the appropriate reference e.g. MDA Constitution and Bylaws, Department of Health directives, Board of Dentistry rules, etc.

References to MDA Digest of Policies and/or bylaws are extremely important. All resolutions should include pertinent references and clearly state present MDA policy on the issue or explicitly state that no such policy exists. You can find the Digest of Policies, MDA bylaws and Constitution in the Governance section of the MDA website.

Tip: Delegates may find value in relevant statistics, analyses, surveys, commentaries, etc. both for and against your resolution being included in the Whereas clauses. This information will also be used during debate of the Resolution at the MDA House of Delegates, especially at the open hearing of the Reference Committees.

Tip: It is best to provide information that can be supported by fact. Anecdotal information should be used with caution.

Tip: You may also contact the members of the various MDA Committees, Task Forces or MDA staff as they can be invaluable resources on how the MDA is currently pursuing many issues.

Resolving clause(s)

This is the “resolution proper,” as it describes the proposed changes in the official policy of the MDA. The Resolving clause will become MDA policy, and is the most important part of the resolution. Each Resolving clause must be able to stand on its own as the supporting information found in the Whereas clause(s) is not retained in the final record of the resolution.

Each Resolving clause must contain an actionable request and makes sense when read alone, since the Resolving clause represents the policy that will be adopted. Thus, Resolving clauses are often stated in single sentence form.

MDA resolutions may call on the MDA to take specific action or position, or adopt a certain policy. This is a very important point – if you want the MDA to take an action, the Resolving clause should begin as: "**RESOLVED, the MDA...**"

Resolutions can have more than one Resolving clause.

Resolving clauses should be stated in the affirmative, since the negative form is often confusing to the House of Delegates.

Well written Resolving clauses will be specific enough to get your point across, but flexible enough to be relevant in the long-term.

Tip: If the background statement includes factual information such as metrics from outside sources those sources should be cited (e.g. “according to the Center for Disease Control, In 2012, there were nearly 40,000 new cases of cancer of the oral cavity and pharynx diagnosed in the United States.)

Tip: If the background statement includes an opinion it should be stated as such e.g. “it is my opinion that

Tip: If the resolution involves a bylaws change or change in an MDA policy the author may describe the change in narrative form rather than citing the actual bylaws/policy with additions underlined and strikeouts for additions. Bylaws changes will be referred to the Constitution and Bylaws committee for proper format.

Tip: Read the Resolving Clause on its own. Does it stand on its own without the background information? Only the resolving clause will be debated and included in the Digest of Policies.

Tip: Review the Digest of Policies and previous Resolutions to determine if this Resolution has been submitted before or is repetitive. (<https://www.mndental.org/files/02.-Digest-of-Policies-2016.pdf>)

Submitting Information

Resolutions need to be submitted on the MDA Resolution Form which can be found on the MDA website. Completed Resolutions should be emailed to hod@mndental.org, if you do not receive a confirmation message with 48 hours please confirm with the MDA that your Resolution was received.

The person or entity that has submitted the resolution should include the following:

- Name of person or entity submitting the resolution:
- District, Committee, Delegate or BOT
- Author’s name and signature
- Date of submission

- Email, phone, or other contact information of the author.

When a resolution is received by the MDA it is assigned a number in the order in which it was received. It may have a letter attached that provides additional information used by the staff, the Speaker or others.

MDA staff work with the MDA treasurer to forecast the type of fiscal impact a resolution will have on the association.

MDA staff also review the resolution to determine if it falls into any of the established categories of the MDA strategic plan.

IV. Deadlines for Submitting a Resolution

Deadlines are defined in the Rules of the MDA House of Delegates and are based upon the date the HOD convenes that year. The actual date of these deadlines will vary from year to year, *please see the attached current year HOD Important Dates* document attached. Deadlines are defined in the Rules of the MDA House of Delegates:

1. Resolutions are to be received by the MDA at the HOD email address (HOD@mndental.org), 70 days before the House convenes.
2. Post-deadline resolutions are those submitted to the MDA after the 70 day deadline but at least 7 days before the House convenes.
 - a. A post-deadline resolution will be introduced at the first session of the House and needs an affirmative vote by the two-thirds of the delegates for the Resolution to be heard by the delegation on the second day.
 - b. Once approved to be heard, post-deadline resolutions have equal status with the on time resolutions.
3. A resolution may be presented from the floor at the Second Session of the House under “New Business”. Similar to post-deadline resolutions, a resolution from the floor during the second session will be heard if two-thirds of the delegates agree the resolution should be heard. The motion to hear a resolution from the floor is not be debatable.

Resolution authors are strongly advised to submit resolutions at least 70 days prior to the first session of the House.

V. The Timeline of a Resolution Submission

Prior to the First Session of the House of Delegates

- All resolutions are submitted to the MDA on the Resolution Submission Form.
- Resolutions are to be submitted via the House of Delegates email address, hod@mndental.org.
- Resolutions are received at MDA and numbered by MDA staff.
- Legal Counsel reviews the resolution for conformity with federal, state and local statutes.

- The resolution is referred to the Resolutions Review Committee for review of proper format and clarity.
- MDA Board of Trustees Reviews all pre-deadline resolutions and provide comments. The BOT has been instructed by the HOD to make comments and indicate support or opposition to the resolution.
- Post-deadline resolutions receive board comments if time permits.
- Financial impact review by MDA staff and Treasurer.
- Resolutions are disseminated to delegates.

At HOD

Resolutions are referred to a Reference Committee

The Speaker of the House assigns the resolution to one of two reference committees

First Executive Session of the Reference Committees

Each Reference Committee meets in a closed session prior to the first session of the HOD to review the resolutions and reports of the various MDA committees and officers assigned to it. The committee shall, as a result of such review, prepare a report for the First Session of the House that acknowledges those reports. The committee may originate a resolution on the basis of the information contained in such reports.

First Session of the House of Delegates

The House receives the reports of the Reference Committees.

Reference Committees Open Hearing

Following the First Session open hearings of the Reference Committees, are held where information and opinions by any MDA member are received on the proposed resolutions. Debate does not occur and no decisions are made at the open hearing. Members of a Reference Committee shall not give testimony at the open hearing of the Reference Committee on which they serve; however, they may give personal testimony at the open hearing of the other Reference Committee and at their Reference Committee's Executive Session, which follows the open hearings.

Tip: Consider in advance who you want to testify at the Open Hearing of the Reference Committee.

Tip: You may want to be sure you have a ready source of current or additional information about the resolution for testimony at the open hearing.

Reference Committees Second Executive session

Following the open hearings, each Reference Committee shall hold an Executive Session at which only the members of the committee, officers of the House, and committee staff are present (on occasion, the committee may request additional information from people who have expertise relative to the specific resolution they are discussing), where the information received at the open hearing is considered, evaluated, and used in consideration of the committee's informed recommendations to the House.

Each Reference Committee makes a recommendation on each Resolution assigned to it. The Reference Committee can also modify resolutions. These recommendations are shared with the delegates via the MDA website and district caucuses.

District Caucuses

Prior to the Second Session of the HOD each district will caucus to discuss the recommendations of the Reference Committees.

Second Session of the House of Delegates

Resolutions are debated and voted upon.

VI. Summary

Resolutions are important to the MDA and your profession because they guide what the MDA does for you and the profession. The process may seem intimidating but the MDA staff is available to assist you at your request.

The Resolution Review Committee is also available to help you clarify your resolution so your issue may be presented in a manner that conveys your intentions accurately. Timely submission of a Resolution increases the opportunity for the Resolution to be clarified through revision