

REPORT OF THE PRIVATE PRACTICE PHYSICIANS SECTION
GOVERNING COUNCIL

PPPS GC Report C
(I-24)

Subject: Getting on with the Times—Expanding PPPS Inclusivity Via Hybrid Meetings
and Voting
(PPPS Resolution 5-A-24)

Presented by:Carolynn Francavilla, MD, Chair

Referred to: PPPS Reference Committee
(, MD, Chair)

1 INTRODUCTION

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3 At its 2024 Annual Meeting, the PPPS Assembly referred Resolution 5-A-24, Getting on with the
4 times—Expanding PPPS Inclusivity Via Hybrid Meetings and Voting, for report. The resolution
5 asked the AMA to:

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7 1. Adopt hybrid meetings and hybrid voting beginning with the 2024 Interim Meeting;
8 and
9
10 2. Amend Internal Operating Procedures and other governing documents to effect these
11 changes.
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13 DISCUSSION

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15 Resolution 5-A-24 seeks to have the Private Practice Physicians Section (PPPS) expand its regular
16 business meetings, which occur ahead of the larger AMA Annual and Interim meetings each year
17 in June and November respectively, to incorporate both face-to-face and virtual operations. The
18 Resolution advocates that doing so will open the doors to greater attendance as well as present
19 more opportunities for engagement from the PPPS’s roughly 400 and growing members,
20 particularly those who are unable to take time away from their practices to attend business
21 meetings which for most participants necessitates not only time from their patients and from the
22 financial revenue they need to survive, but also requires travel expenses and opportunity costs.
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24 *Hybrid section meetings*

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26 The PPPS, as well as other AMA Sections, have not typically engaged in hybrid meetings, that is,
27 meetings that include both in-person attendance and concurrent virtual attendance, in the past.
28 Some Sections have conducted small-scale events, such as an educational session, in a hybrid
29 format, but full meetings have not yet been attempted. Sections have however conducted fully
30 virtual meetings; from Annual 2020 to Annual 2022, all PPPS business meeting activities,
31 including policymaking, elections, voting, and education, were conducted online due to the Covid-
32 19 pandemic.
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1 Virtual meetings were conducted out of necessity; however they offered their own challenges. In
2 particular, the meetings necessitated new contractual obligations on the part of the AMA with
3 software and operators who could manage the technical aspects required to broadcast the meeting
4 content virtually while at the same time managing the interactive elements of the meeting, such as
5 voting during elections or making motions during policy discussions. Those obligations also came
6 with significant financial costs. While that cost was somewhat offset by not holding a face-to-face
7 meeting, a hybrid meeting would require cost expenditures for both in-person and virtual meetings,
8 including double the staff and the costs of the necessary broadcasting and interactive software as
9 well as the operators' time and expense.

10
11 According to information from AMA leadership and on behalf of the current Speaker of the House,
12 the Governing Council would need to consider the significant cost of setting up hybrid functions
13 for voting, debate, making motions, and other procedural actions that would require not only an
14 online, streaming architecture running in real time, but also an operations system and personnel to
15 manage such a platform. What is needed is stronger evidence that hybrid meetings would
16 contribute meaningfully to the PPPS's larger strategic goals of membership growth, advocacy for
17 and protection of private practices, and resource sharing for independent physicians and that those
18 contributions would outweigh the financial and operational costs.

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20 *Policymaking as a virtual activity*

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22 While fully hybrid meetings remain financially and operationally challenging, the PPPS does
23 engage in some activities that could be expanded beyond face-to-face meetings. Adjusting the
24 policymaking process and timeline so that PPPS resolutions are written and reviewed through the
25 PPPS Reference Committee and evaluated and voted upon by PPPS members earlier in the
26 policymaking process could allow the Section to adopt at least a partially virtual Business Meeting
27 to be conducted in advance of the in-person Business Meeting at Annual and Interim meetings.

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29 At the AMA 2024 Annual Meeting, the House of Delegates updated its resolution submission
30 deadline and policy to ensure that all items of business (with the exception of late and emergency
31 resolutions) before the House of Delegates are submitted 45 days ahead of the meeting, providing
32 enough time for items to be included in the HOD Handbook. Because they typically meet later in
33 the cycle than other AMA HOD members, the PPPS, like other sections, has an exception to submit
34 resolutions directly from its business meeting to the House of Delegates, the sections have been
35 asked to limit these items to ones that are urgent or seek to address an immediate need. Under the
36 new HOD procedures, items of business submitted late in the process will not benefit from the
37 same consideration in HOD online forums as items submitted before the 45-day threshold, meaning
38 PPPS items will not receive as much discussion or consideration in HOD reference committees as
39 the overall flow of business is shifted to those items posted online prior to the start of meetings.

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41 *Necessary IOP changes*

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43 While some changes to PPPS operations with respect to policy and elections are subject to the
44 approval of the House of Delegates, the section maintains some flexibility over how it conducts
45 section business. Elections for section leadership require a greater level of administrative scrutiny
46 due to their directly influential nature on the House of Delegates. This discrepancy means that most
47 of the policy changes could be affected in time for the next Business Meeting. The Governing
48 Council also has concerns that as a newer and smaller section, virtual voting in elections could lead
49 to elected leadership that has less experience participating in section meetings. There is also
50 concern that candidates who can organize more electronic voting from their state or specialty

1 would be more likely to get elected, potentially to the detriment of leaders who are most committed
2 to private practice and the PPPS.

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4 CONCLUSION

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6 After consideration, your Governing Council believes that the question of establishing hybrid
7 meetings requires further consideration given the financial and logistical considerations of adopting
8 both face-to-face and virtual meeting processes occurring at the same time. Additionally, the
9 Governing Council has not been able to ascertain with any specificity that such a change would
10 achieve the stated goals, namely to increase participation and make participation more inclusive.
11 The Governing Council believes that more work is needed to answer the question of the feasibility
12 of hybrid meeting solutions and commits to a thorough investigation into such a possibility.
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14 At the same time, the Governing Council does believe that the Private Practice Physicians Section
15 could benefit from adjusting some of its procedures to make virtual participation more accessible
16 and that taking steps to do so for key initiatives could help to bridge the gap between current
17 analog operations and future virtual and/or hybrid operations. More virtual options for
18 policymaking procedures, which are entirely determined by the Section and do not require House
19 of Delegates or Board of Trustee approval, could be implemented in time for the Annual 2025
20 meeting and could help to expand engagement opportunities for Section members who are
21 otherwise unable to attend face-to-face meetings. As the Section has frequently had online
22 Townhall meetings in addition to in-person Business Meetings, those could easily be converted to
23 virtual policymaking meetings to accomplish this.
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25 It is the Governing Council's position that standing up additional virtual policymaking operations
26 would not resolve Resolution 5-A-24's request for greater hybrid opportunities but would serve as
27 an intermediate step toward a future final determination.
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29 RECOMMENDATION

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31 The PPPS Governing Council recommends that the following be adopted in lieu of Resolution 5-A-
32 24, and that the remainder of this report be filed:
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- 34 1. That the Private Practice Physicians Section adjust its policymaking processes and
35 timelines to bring the Section in-line with the AMA House of Delegates resolution
36 submission process to better allow PPPS items of business to receive equal consideration
37 before the House. That process shall be conducted as follows:
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- 39 a. For resolutions intended to be considered at the current meeting: Resolution drafts
40 must be submitted to the Section no later than 90 days before the start of the HOD
41 meeting (approximately March 1 for Annual Meetings and August 1 for Interim
42 Meetings). Section members would have approximately 45 days to review
43 resolutions on the PPPS Online Forum, after which the Section will host a virtual
44 policy meeting at which formal consideration of resolutions will be conducted. At
45 least one week before the virtual policy meeting, the Section will also convene its
46 Reference Committee to consider the resolutions and make formal
47 recommendations to the section at large. Resolutions advanced by section vote will
48 then be forwarded to the House of Delegates ahead of its submission deadline (45
49 days prior to the start of the HOD Meeting).
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- 1 b. For resolutions intended to be considered at a future meeting: Resolution drafts can
2 be submitted to the Section at any time up until one week before the current
3 Business Meeting. Resolutions will be posted to the PPPS Online Forum and
4 available for section consideration until such time as the future meeting becomes
5 current. Resolutions submitted to the section later than 90 days before the start of
6 the current meeting are automatically considered for future meetings unless the
7 author states the resolution should be considered a late resolution or an emergency
8 resolution. In such cases, the late/emergency resolution will follow the procedures
9 outlined in the PPPS IOPs.
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- 11 c. The Section retains the ability to advance late resolutions and emergency
12 resolutions up until the opening of the House of Delegates meeting. Consideration
13 of late and emergency resolutions will occur at the in-person PPPS Business
14 Meeting.
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- 16 2. The Governing Council shall determine a mechanism for consideration of regular items of
17 business introduced after the 45-day advance deadline that are not necessarily late or
18 emergent that are to be considered at the concurrent business meeting to be forwarded to
19 that meeting's HOD and not required to be advanced at a future meeting.
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- 21 3. That the Governing Council should further explore strategies for adopting virtual
22 attendance and virtual engagement, even if in a limited capacity, for future Section
23 business meetings.