



AMERICAN COLLEGE OF  
OCCUPATIONAL AND  
ENVIRONMENTAL MEDICINE

# COMPONENT MANUAL

*ACOEM Component Society  
Leadership Manual*

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2012

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*ACOEM Component Society Leadership Manual - 2012*

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## **INTRODUCTION AND ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS**

ACOEM is at its core a vital organization. True to its vision statement, it continues to be the pre-eminent organization of physicians who champion the health and safety of workers, workplaces, and environments. It has produced valuable products and services, including the *ACOEM Practice Guidelines*, several well-referenced position papers, and important newsletters. It offers useful and relevant conferences, courses, and on-line educational activities. Its legislative advocacy promotes the unique interests of the field.

This manual is written with the conviction that the success of ACOEM depends largely on the success of its regional components. It is at the component level that prospective members, who are likely to be known by current members, can be most effectively recruited, introduced to the organization, and involved in its affairs. Through such activities as participation on committees or in the planning of meetings, and/or service as a Board member or officer, newer members learn the organization and develop leadership skills. At some point, it is natural for many active component members to become involved at the national level in such activities as service on the House of Delegates and ACOEM committees and councils, contributions to position papers, and presentations at AOHC. It is hoped that this manual will support the development of strong components, which will in turn contribute to the future success of ACOEM.

This manual is an extensive update of a Component Leadership Manual that was written in 1997. Material from the earlier manual has been incorporated into the current manual. The current edition of the manual is the result of the hard work of numerous individuals. Drs. Dan Janiga and Bill Buchta proposed the update as a House of Delegates project. Several component leaders, including Marian Swinker, Philip Adamo, Constantine Gean, and Paul Papanek, offered suggestions regarding the content of the manual. Special thanks to Alan Engelberg, Dan Janiga, and Melissa Bean for their review of the manuscript and their useful comments, and to Jerrie Abrahamsen and Miles Hoffman and the rest of the ACOEM staff for the valuable information they provided.

This manual is intended to be a living document. Periodic updates are anticipated, based on changes of ACOEM policy and practice, and suggestions from users. Feedback regarding the manual, including suggestions for additions, changes, and improvements, is welcome, and may be directed to ACOEM.

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## CHAPTER I ORGANIZATION AND GOVERNANCE

### *Introduction*

This chapter summarizes the organizational structure and leadership roles of a typical ACOEM component society. While much of this information is basic, this chapter lays the foundation for understanding the operations of a component.

### *Component Leadership Roles and Responsibilities*

**Board of Directors** – The component’s Board of Directors is responsible for carrying out the society’s objectives and purposes as defined by its bylaws. To do this, the Board engages in strategic planning, makes major decisions regarding educational activities and other events, oversees component finances, and adopts positions relevant to government affairs. Board members typically hold office for a 3-year term. This allows members to gain experience in the operation of the component and facilitates continuity of component leadership. Serving on the Board is often a prelude to becoming an officer. The Board may also hire and evaluate the performance of executive management (see paid staff below).

**Component Officers** – The **president** occupies a key leadership role; however, he or she is ultimately subject to the Board of Directors. The duties of the president are defined by the Board and/or component bylaws. The president is typically authorized to represent the component in various forums, sign contracts, expend funds up to a specified limit, appoint committee members, preside over Board and general membership meetings, and conduct routine component business. In addition, the president has an important public relations role, both within and outside of the component that may include welcoming new members and representing the component to other associations, both medical and non-medical.

The **vice president** assumes the duties of the president when the president is unavailable or otherwise unable to act. The vice president may have additional duties as assigned by the president and/or the Board or specified in the component’s bylaws.

The **secretary** takes minutes of Board meetings, distributes minutes of previous meeting as required, gives notice of meetings as required by bylaws or law, and maintains the component’s non-financial records.

The **treasurer** (this position is often combined with that of the secretary) deposits dues and other component income, disburses funds at the direction of the president and/or Board, provides financial reports to the Board, and maintains the component’s financial records.

The **past president** is often a Board officer. Because of his or her experience, this person can be a valuable source of advice and counsel.

**Delegates** to ACOEM's House of Delegates (HOD) play a key liaison role between the component and ACOEM. They represent their component’s interests before ACOEM’s HOD and can influence resolutions which, if passed, go to ACOEM's Board of Directors for consideration. Delegates also communicate HOD activities back to the component, including action taken on resolutions, and summarize reports from the ACOEM president, treasurer, and executive director which are presented at HOD meetings.

**Paid Staff** – The services of paid staff are sometimes utilized by a component. This individual may be designated as executive director, executive administrator, or association executive, depending on his or

her role and the Board's preference. The duties of this individual vary and depend on the needs of the component. They can include conference planning, preparation of joint sponsorship applications for CME, preparation and filing of required reports, and serving as an advisor to component leadership.

However, the assistance and expertise that can be provided by a skilled association executive must be weighed against the financial cost to the component. Smaller components may function suitably by relying solely on the volunteer efforts of their members. Larger, more complex components, may find that they need the additional assistance provided by paid staff.

When considering the services of an association executive, components should be aware of the implications of hiring an individual and making direct payments to that person. This type of arrangement creates the possibility of an employer-employee relationship which has legal and tax reporting implications and obligations. For this reason, such arrangements should be reviewed by an attorney and/or accountant. To minimize the need for such initial and ongoing professional advice, a component may choose to engage the services of an association executive through an association management firm or other intermediary.

A potential source for component staffing services is the state medical association. These associations often have large staffs and may provide staffing services to state and regional specialty societies (e.g., ACOEM components). The contract or agreement would thus be between the component and the medical association, rather than between the component and an individual.

Alternatively, the services of an association management company can be procured. Such firms typically provide management and staff support to multiple organizations and, as in the case of a state medical association, the agreement or contract would be with the company and not an individual. A web search for association management companies within the component's geographic area may locate suitable firms. In the case of an association management company, references from past and current clients should be requested. It is also prudent to verify corporate status and insurance coverage (workers' compensation, liability, etc.), and perhaps have an attorney review the arrangement.

The component will have latitude in selecting an executive staff member. Ideally the candidate will have expertise in the areas that are needed by the component (meeting planning, financial statements, etc.). The certified association executive (CAE) credential is not essential, but it does indicate the individual has met minimum standards of experience and training.

ACOEM staff often has a working relationship with state medical associations at various levels and is a potential referral source. Depending on the nature of association management services desired, ACOEM may be able to provide them directly to components at costs lower than commercially available.

*Committees* – The importance of a strong committee structure cannot be overstated. Committees serve a number of functions and can:

- focus attention and effort on the specific task or goal assigned to the committee;
- distribute the workload among committee members and prevent work from falling to one or a few people, thereby reducing the risk of burnout;
- bring together interested people with a variety of ideas and approaches to accomplishing the tasks of the committee; and
- provide an avenue for members to become involved in the component.

Standing committees may be specified in the component's bylaws. Ad hoc committees can be appointed by the Board of Directors and/or the president. Committees may include:

- A membership committee, which focuses on attracting and retaining component members, and promoting the involvement of members in component affairs.
- An education committee, which plans educational activities. This committee may plan and implement component-sponsored educational conferences, web-based learning activities, cooperative ventures with medical schools and residency programs, educational sessions at AOHC, and other educational programs.
- A conference or program committee, which plans meetings and conferences. It may be appropriate for a separate committee to plan each activity. These may be stand-alone committees, or sub-committees of the education committee.
- A government affairs committee, which monitors, researches, and provides recommendations regarding pending legislation and regulations.
- A finance committee which oversees component budget development and expenditure processes.

### ***Bylaws***

Bylaws govern the organizational structure and standard procedures of the component. New component leaders will inherit the existing bylaws and they should be familiar with them. They should also review the ACOEM bylaws ([www.acoem.org/bylaws.aspx](http://www.acoem.org/bylaws.aspx)). Article III (Component Societies), Article IV (Membership), and Article XI (House of Delegates) should be items of particular focus. In reviewing the two sets of bylaws, leaders should note any conflicts or inconsistencies between ACOEM and component bylaws, and take steps to amend the component bylaws as necessary. Unincorporated components that wish to incorporate may also need to amend existing bylaws in order to comply with state incorporation requirements. Similarly, components desiring recognition as tax exempt organizations by the IRS may find that one or more bylaws amendments are required.

Components should ensure that they follow the ACOEM component membership requirements. As noted in ACOEM bylaws, Article III, Section 2(f), component members who are eligible for ACOEM membership must join ACOEM; otherwise, membership in the component will be terminated. Component members who are not eligible for ACOEM membership may retain their component membership.

### ***ACOEM Requirements***

ACOEM bylaws (Article III, Section 2(g)) contain a number of requirements for components. These include:

- Notification to ACOEM of any changes in officers, mailing address, or bylaws
- Business meetings at least annually, open to all members, in geographically diverse locations
- Processes to keep members and ACOEM informed of matters of interest to OEM physicians in the component's territory
- Attendance of a delegate at the House of Delegates at least once per year
- Submission of an annual report which outlines component activities in the previous year.

ACOEM requires submission of an annual report that addresses all of these requirements. ACOEM prompts components for this report and provides a standard reporting form. The report is due January 31 of each year and is submitted to ACOEM Headquarters. The report is reviewed by the HOD officers and is maintained in an electronic file by ACOEM staff.

### ***Incorporation and Tax-Exempt Status***

*The following information is of a general nature and is not to be construed as tax or legal advice. Component leaders who have specific questions regarding this material as it applies to their component should consult U.S. Internal Revenue Service (IRS) publications, a qualified tax advisor, and/or legal counsel.*

*Introduction* – Component leaders should be aware of their component’s corporate and tax-exempt status, as these factors affect certain benefits as well as constraints. Leaders of unincorporated components should determine if it is advisable to incorporate. Leaders of components that do not have tax-exempt status should determine whether it is appropriate to apply for state and federal tax exemption. Leaders of tax-exempt components should review whether the section of the Internal Revenue Code under which they are granted tax exemption is the most suitable for the component.

*Incorporation* – Many components have incorporated, while some may not have taken this step and may have the status of unincorporated associations. Benefits of incorporation may include:

- Board members and officers receive substantial protection from personal liability when acting in their official capacities. This protection is in addition to liability insurance provided by ACOEM.
- Incorporation establishes the component as a stable legal entity, which may facilitate its ability to enter into contracts, disburse funds, and engage in other transactions.
- Incorporation is the first step towards recognition by the IRS as a tax-exempt organization, which confers further benefits to the component.

The disadvantages of incorporation may include the time and expense of filing the required paperwork, as well as the requirement for periodic filings. Application for incorporation occurs under state law, and components typically incorporate as nonprofit corporations. Specific requirements for incorporation and annual reporting vary from state to state. Multi-state components interested in incorporation need to determine the most advantageous state for incorporation. A complete discussion of incorporation is beyond the scope of this manual. For further information, consult the office of the appropriate state attorney general or secretary of state, and/or to seek legal counsel.

*Tax-exempt Status* – Following incorporation, a component may apply to the IRS for tax-exempt status. This is usually done under Section 501(c)(3) of the Internal Revenue Code. Under this section, component dues may be tax-deductible as charitable contributions. However, this section limits the extent to which a component can attempt to influence legislation. Alternatively, a component may choose to apply under Section 501(c)(6), which allows more legislative activities but does not allow the tax deduction of dues, other than as a business expense.

When tax-exempt status is granted, the component’s revenue will be exempt from federal corporate taxes. The component may then apply for a state corporate tax exemption, generally by filing a copy of the IRS tax exemption letter with the state.

***As previously noted, this section presents a brief overview, and should not be relied upon for specific guidance. The best source of advice is the counsel of a qualified attorney or tax advisor.***

### ***Resources***

Boardsource ([www.boardsource.org](http://www.boardsource.org)) is dedicated to developing highly functioning non-profit boards. Both free and for-cost resources are available listed. While the target audience is Board members/other stakeholders of large non-profit organizations that engage in fundraising, many of the resources are

relevant to component leaders. The site may also be of interest to component leaders who aspire to Board service in larger organizations (including service on the ACOEM Board).

*How to Form a Nonprofit Corporation*, 9<sup>th</sup> ed. (2009) by Anthony Mancuso, is a valuable resource for information on incorporation and/or 501(c)(3) tax-exempt status. It contains step-by-step instructions for incorporation and applying for tax-exempt status. The differing incorporation requirements of the various states are addressed, and an accompanying CD contains numerous documents, including IRS forms and editable articles of incorporation and bylaws.

The IRS Charities & Non-Profits web page ([www.irs.gov/charities/index.html](http://www.irs.gov/charities/index.html)) will be of interest to components applying for tax-exempt status. Relevant pages can be accessed through links on this page and through links on the “Charitable Orgs” and “Other Non-Profits” tabs. Also, IRS Publication 557, “Tax-Exempt Status for Your Organization,” ([www.irs.gov/pub/irs-pdf/p557.pdf](http://www.irs.gov/pub/irs-pdf/p557.pdf)) is particularly relevant. Educational resources targeted to 501(c)(3) organizations are available at [www.stayexempt.irs.gov](http://www.stayexempt.irs.gov).

## CHAPTER II

### COMPONENT FINANCES

#### *Introduction*

Component finances – cash flow, budgeting, dues, and non-dues revenue – are among the chief responsibilities of a component and its officers. Component members entrust their leaders with the management and administration of their dues. They want to see a return on their investment in the form of component activity and to know that component funds are managed wisely. This chapter contains basic financial guidelines for ACOEM components, but does not cover all the legal requirements a component may need to meet. **To ensure component compliance with all federal and state regulations, consult an attorney and/or accountant knowledgeable in such areas.**

#### *Financial Records*

Since component officers change regularly, component files are important. These files should include:

##### *Permanent records:*

1. A component charter, if available, possibly even issued by ACOEM
2. Component bylaws (current)
3. Component Articles of Incorporation and related documents
4. ACOEM bylaws
5. Minutes of previous executive board and general membership meetings
6. All federal and state tax returns
7. All audit reports, if any (both CPA reports and IRS audits)

##### *Other important records:*

1. All payroll tax returns (for paid staff)
2. Records of paid bills
3. Financial ledger books/records
4. Significant contracts and agreements, including insurance policies, if any
5. Pertinent correspondence
6. Bank statements, canceled checks or check images, and reconciliations
7. Property rental/ownership records, if any
8. Financial statements
9. Component equity statements

If there is no component office or permanent location for component files, records should be smoothly transferred from outgoing to incoming officers usually at the annual meeting when officers are elected and/or installed. Storage facilities may be used for the records, and if so, keys must also be transferred to the new officers. ACOEM also offers limited complimentary storage facilities at headquarters.

#### *Budgeting*

The component budget can be a planning and control tool that helps measure actual results against projections. It assists in developing affordable component activities within the limits of revenues and helps in understanding how to use revenues to develop programs to meet member needs and achieve component goals. A budget does not have to be complicated or complex. Whether the component chooses to budget according to types of revenue and expense or by project, it is best to **keep it simple!**

Begin the budgeting process with a realistic assessment of component income. For most components, there are two major sources of revenues, i.e. dues, and revenues from educational meetings. Component

dues are collected by ACOEM and transmitted to components periodically throughout the year, currently in April, October, and January. January dues remittance is highest, due to the large number of renewing members. April remittance is generally less than half the January total, and the October remittance is even less. Meeting revenues are received prior to and at the time of the educational event.

The membership base should first be evaluated. Is the component membership stable? Review the dues structure to determine if it reflects the value of the activities and services the component provides. Then, look at the cost of current and planned programs. Do member dues provide a sufficient working base to support these component core activities? Should tuition for educational meetings be changed?

Examples of component expenses:

1. Executive Board and membership meetings
2. Educational meeting expenses
3. Newsletters, mailings, and website
4. Liaison expenses (political and non-political)
5. Insurance coverage for officers, etc.
6. Office and staffing expense
7. Component support for members attending ACOEM meetings
8. Residency support/contributions
9. Gifts and donations
10. Publicity

If the present revenue cannot support the planned projects and activities, explore ways of increasing revenue or reducing planned expenditures. Consider recruiting corporate sponsors for the component website, advertisements in the component newsletter, and/or rental of exhibition space at educational meetings. If any of these activities involve joint sponsorship of CME activities, scrutinize them carefully to ensure compliance with policies regarding corporate sponsorship. ACOEM staff can provide guidance if there is any question as to the appropriateness of such activities.

If all else fails, a component may need to consider cutting programs or finding ways to do things less expensively. The alternative might be a dues increase, which may be appropriate. A component survey may be the tool to use to determine member satisfaction and willingness to pay increased dues. If a dues increase seems to be viable, try to add a no-cost or publicize an under-utilized service as a “*value added*” benefit to belonging to the component. Another alternative to cutting programs or finding ways to do things less expensively would be to increase tuition fees for CME activities. Look at what other components and other professional medical groups charge per CME hour or per comparable activity for their programs to see if your educational offerings are fairly priced. With a well thought out revenue projection, including proposals for increasing revenue and/or decreasing expenses, plan for the year’s total expenses and estimate an effective, realistic budget.

### ***Financial Accountability and Controls***

Component treasurers and other officers involved in budget development have both fiduciary and custodial roles. There are a number of safeguards that can assist component leaders in these roles.

### ***Financial Guidelines***

First, the component must establish acceptable policies and procedures. Here are some questions that must be answered:

1. Who handles receipts and how? Where are disbursements from ACOEM to be directed?
2. Where is the money deposited?

3. Who approves expenditures and how?
4. What documentation is required for expenditures?
5. Who can sign checks, and are two signatures required?
6. Are various persons involved in order to prevent entire control by only one person?
7. Is it clear that component monies must be in a separate account and not mixed with a member's personal or business account?
8. How often are financial reports prepared? Who prepares them? Are any changes needed in this arena?
9. Will the component use cash or accrual accounting? (The accrual method is preferred.)
10. Will the component defer dues revenue or recognize it as revenue when received?
11. Should the component be audited? If so, how frequently?
12. Are members reimbursed for necessary travel? If so, is there a clear, board approved policy for such expenditures to assure uniformity of treatment?

### ***Cash Accountability***

There are a number of things a component can do to create a proper check and balance system on the spending and accounting of component funds. A simple way to monitor expenses is to require two signatures on checks over a predetermined set amount that the component has established. The amount must be kept reasonable so smaller bills (which would require only one signature for payment) may be paid in a timely fashion to avoid interest charges or late fees. Also, there should be a third authorized signature for emergency situations (e.g., extended travel, illness, or death of a member). The bank will need current signature authorization cards indicating who can sign checks on the component account. This authorization process varies from bank to bank so it may be wise to select a bank that is "customer friendly and hassle free." The component may also consider bonding its officers who handle or have access to component funds.

### ***Bookkeeping and Financial Reporting***

It is imperative that the assigned component officer keep track of each year's component expenditures. If finances are complex, a formalized accounting system is helpful. Smaller components may only need to maintain an accurate checkbook. Whatever bookkeeping method is chosen, records should be kept permanently and transferred appropriately when a new treasurer is elected.

### ***Financial Statements***

Component financial statements indicate how much money the component received and spent during the reporting period. The statements should include enough detail to allow accurate review. Accurate, timely, and understandable financial statements are an important tool to safeguard the component's financial stability and integrity.

### ***Equity Statements***

Equity statements are usually issued by the component's treasurer, accountant, or executive staff on an annual (or more frequent) basis.

### ***Audits***

Organizations that receive substantial contributions, employ a paid fundraiser, or receive a significant amount of federal funds may be required by law to have an audit of their finances on a routine basis. It is unlikely that components will face this requirement, due to the nature of their activities. Components who question whether an audit is required may consult the Attorney General or the Secretary of State in the state in which the component is incorporated.

### ***Fiscal Year Parameters***

Parameters for a fiscal year may vary from component to component, but there may be some advantage to adopting the calendar year parameter the ACOEM National Office uses to make component planning, budgeting, and reporting easier.

### ***Insurance***

ACOEM holds an insurance policy which protects component directors, officers, volunteers, and committee members from liability. Premiums are charged to components and coverage is automatic – no component action is required. Depending on the scope of its activities, a component may want to consider purchasing additional insurance. Common coverage may include general/professional liability, meeting cancellation insurance, as well as property policies, i.e., fire, theft, liability, if the component has a building.

### ***Taxes/Tax Forms***

**The best source of advice about component taxes is a qualified attorney or accountant knowledgeable in the affairs of tax-exempt organizations.** Components, which are recognized as 501(c)(3) tax-exempt organizations, are generally required to file a tax return in the 990 series. Most components have gross receipts of less than \$25,000 and will therefore be able to file a 990-N (e-Postcard). This threshold was increased to \$50,000 for tax years ending December 31, 2010 or later (see IRS web site for more details). Depending on its activities, a component may have additional federal and state reporting requirements which are beyond the scope of this manual. Components are advised to consult the Secretary of State in the state of incorporation, the IRS web site, and/or a qualified tax advisor with any questions.

### ***Payroll Reporting Requirements***

A component which employs staff is responsible for filing multiple required reports to both federal and state governments. An attorney and/or accountant should be used or consulted when completing these requirements.

### ***Tax Penalties***

The most severe penalty that may be assessed a tax-exempt organization is the revocation of its tax exempt status. As this is a serious possibility, care must be taken to insure all filings are made accurately and timely. It is important to remember that not only is the organization subject to penalties for late filing and/or failure to file returns, but the individuals responsible for the filing may be subject to penalties. Be sure to check the component bylaws, job description, and component financial policies to determine who is a “responsible” individual. Good business sense warrants a competent tax attorney or accountant to review or even complete the appropriate tax forms or documents.

### ***Conclusion***

Effective financial management is one of the biggest challenges for a component leader or officer.

***Remember that what is provided here are only guidelines and do not constitute legal or accounting advice. This information should not be used exclusively to avoid the services of a competent tax lawyer or certified public accountant.***

### ***Further Resources***

*How to Form a Nonprofit Corporation, 9<sup>th</sup> Edition*, as referenced in Chapter I, includes a section, “How to Find State Offices and Statutes Online,” which may be of particular value in researching state tax and reporting requirements. Also see IRS Publication 557, “Tax-Exempt Status for Your Organization,” at [www.irs.gov/pub/irs-pdf/p557.pdf](http://www.irs.gov/pub/irs-pdf/p557.pdf), and IRS Publication 598, “Tax on Unrelated Business Income of Exempt Organizations,” at [www.irs.gov/pub/irs-pdf/p598.pdf](http://www.irs.gov/pub/irs-pdf/p598.pdf). Educational resources can be found at [www.stayexempt.irs.gov/Home.aspx](http://www.stayexempt.irs.gov/Home.aspx).

## **CHAPTER III**

### **COMMUNICATIONS TOOLS**

#### ***Introduction***

Components have a number of tools at their disposal to allow communication with component members, prospective members, interested parties, and the general public. These tools vary in sophistication. This chapter will review some of these tools and their possible uses.

#### ***Personal Visits by Component Leaders***

Efforts to enlist the support of an OEM residency director or the medical director of a large occupational medicine group in membership recruitment efforts may warrant a personal visit. It is potentially the form of communication that carries the most impact. While personal visits may be time-consuming, they are usually justified by the importance of the situation.

#### ***Telephone Calls***

Phone calls are more personal than many other forms of communication and are appropriate and useful in a number of situations, including welcoming new members, following up with non-renewing members, or inviting members to participate on a committee or project.

#### ***Mail***

Mail has been largely supplanted by e-mail, but it is a better option when a more personal form of communication is desired. A personal letter of appreciation from a component president or committee chair will be more favorably received than an e-mail. Similarly, expressions of gratitude to outside parties, such as a note of thanks to a legislator for taking time to discuss pending legislation, are better communicated via a personally signed note.

Large-volume mailings are typically used to advertise component educational meetings and other events. Such mailings are more expensive than mass e-mail messages, but have the advantages of bypassing the problem of spam filters and outdated e-mail addresses, and can reinforce e-mail messages. Postcards are relatively inexpensive and can be used to provide advance notice of a meeting ("save the date") before the details of the meeting have been finalized and refer to a web site where more information is available. (Note: Components recognized by the IRS as tax-exempt organizations may be eligible for reduced bulk mailing rates, although the costs of printing and addressing the material will also need to be taken into account.) A postcard can be followed up with a print copy of the program when available. For purposes of receiving mail, it is suggested that a component post office box be established at a local post office or private mail box service, or the address of the association executive be used.

#### ***E-mail***

E-mail is one of the most common communication methods used due to its negligible cost and its ability to reach virtually an entire component membership. Component web pages on the ACOEM web site offer the ability to send e-mails to the entire component membership without having to construct a component e-mail list.

#### ***Component Newsletter***

A component newsletter is a useful means to provide updates of component activities. It should include news of recent events, notification of upcoming events, acknowledgment of specific contributions by

members, and opportunities for service. A column by the component president or another component leader is a vital element of the newsletter. The newsletter may be mailed, e-mailed, and/or posted on the component web site. The frequency of a newsletter is more important than its length – once a quarter is reasonable. Regular publication of a newsletter provides a consistent reminder to members that they belong to a component that is active, and that opportunities for involvement exist.

### ***Journal of Occupational and Environmental Medicine (JOEM)***

The People and Events (P&E) section of the *Journal of Occupational and Environmental Medicine (JOEM)* is useful tool for communicating component news to the wider OEM community. Appropriate items for submission include major component meetings and conferences, component election results, and component awards. Items may be submitted to Marianne Dreger or Debbie Paddock, ACOEM Communications Department, at [mdreger@acoem.org](mailto:mdreger@acoem.org) or [dpaddak@acoem.org](mailto:dpaddak@acoem.org). There is a 4 to 5 month lag to publication. As this section of *JOEM* also includes a Calendar of Events, dates, locations, and names of contact persons of future component meetings should be submitted to ACOEM staff as soon as they are known for inclusion in the Calendar, and further details provided as the program takes shape for a more detail write-up in the P&E section.

### ***Component Web Site***

A component web site is a method to communicate to the membership and can serve as the “public face” of a component. Components that wish to establish a web site need to: 1) secure a domain name; 2) construct a web site; and 3) arrange a web-hosting service. A fourth element, the ability to receive e-mail through the web site, is also recommended. These four services are offered as a bundle by a number of providers, including Go Daddy ([www.godaddy.com](http://www.godaddy.com)), Intuit ([www.intuit.com/website-building-software](http://www.intuit.com/website-building-software)), Yahoo! (<http://smallbusiness.yahoo.com>), and iPage ([www.ipage.com](http://www.ipage.com)). It is advisable to shop among these and other providers to compare services, prices, and on-line reviews and ratings. (Note: component contact information, including a link to the component’s web site if one exists, is provided on the public pages of ACOEM’s web site. Since this may be the only way for a potential member to learn of the component society in his/her area, it is important that this information always be up to date.)

Suggested elements of a component web site:

- A description of the geographic area covered by the component and the mission of the component. The component may wish to use ACOEM's vision and mission statements: “The (...) Association of Occupational and Environmental Medicine encompasses the states of (... and ...). (...) is a component society of the American College of Occupational and Environmental Medicine (ACOEM), the pre-eminent organization of physicians who champion the health and safety of workers, workplaces, and environments. ACOEM provides leadership to promote optimal health and safety of workers, workplaces, and environments by educating health professionals and the public...” etc.
- Contact information. It is suggested that a generic e-mail address ([administrator@\(...\).oem.org](mailto:administrator@(...).oem.org)) be established in order to receive e-mail from the web site (and elsewhere). A physical address (post office box or the address of the executive administrator, as noted above) should also be provided.
- Calendar of upcoming events.
- Brochures and registration information for upcoming conferences, ideally downloadable PDF documents.
- Information regarding membership, including eligibility criteria and a downloadable application form, and/or a link to the membership section of the ACOEM web site.

- Current newsletter if applicable.
- Links to the ACOEM web site.

A component may choose to include additional information on its web site including:

- Component bylaws.
- List of officers, board members, and House of Delegates representatives. As noted above, contact information should be limited to a generic email address; personal contact information should not be listed on a public web site.
- Links to web sites of NIOSH, OSHA, medical schools, and other institutions within the boundaries of the component that offer educational activities relevant to OEM.
- Links to national and local web sites of allied organizations (AIHA, AAOHN, etc.).
- News and photographs from recent component events.
- Educational material for the general public (when selecting such material, be aware of copyright restrictions).

Components may wish to establish a members-only section of their web site. However, this is not essential, as the component pages of the ACOEM web site can also serve this function.

### ***ACOEM Web Site/MyCOMPONENT Web Pages***

A major redesign of the ACOEM web site was completed in March 2011. Each component is provided with web pages to which news, a calendar of upcoming events, documents (newsletters, bylaws, etc.), and photographs may be posted. A current roster of component members is also included. In addition, component leaders can easily send e-mails to all component members, and establish forums and discussion groups.

Component web pages are accessible only to members of each respective component. ACOEM component web pages and public component web sites can thus be seen as complementary communications tools. ACOEM MyCOMPONENT web pages, with their greater security and privacy, are useful for internal communication and collaboration, while a public web site can present the “public face” of a component to nonmember physicians, allied occupational health and safety professionals, and the general public.

Because ACOEM MyCOMPONENT web pages are provided free of charge and are relatively easy to populate, they can serve as a first step for components that wish to establish a web presence, and may be the only web pages that a component needs. It is recommended that all components populate and update their ACOEM web pages. One or two members (content administrators) should be designated to perform these tasks. For instructions and technical assistance regarding MyComponent web pages, contact ACOEM staff at [memberinfo@acoem.org](mailto:memberinfo@acoem.org).

### ***Social Media***

The use of social media has expanded greatly over the past few years, and many organizations now have a presence on such media as Facebook, Twitter, and LinkedIn. This is understandable; the large number of people who are members or subscribers to these sites and the ability to establish a presence at no cost (at least monetarily) make it appealing for organizations to use these sites to publicize themselves and their activities. Components may wish to explore the use of these sites.

Facebook and Twitter are two of the sites most frequently used by organizations. A brief introduction to Facebook for non-profit organizations can be found at <https://facebook-inc.box.net/shared/tgft7ujmsp>. An organization page must be created from a personal account, which can complicate the transition when a different component member takes over management of a Facebook page. It should also be remembered that appropriate adjustments to privacy and permissions settings should be made, and that the content of a Facebook page is ultimately the property of Facebook. In other words, a Facebook page is not a substitute for a component web site.

Twitter is used to send short messages to mobile devices and e-mail accounts. It is perhaps most useful as a tool to send reminders of events or to alert members to new material on the component web site.

### ***Important Considerations for Web-based Communication Tools***

All components are provided component pages on the ACOEM web site. Many have web sites and some have Facebook pages. It is important for one or two responsible people to monitor these sites and **keep the content up to date**. In addition, discussion groups/forums and Facebook and other postings should be frequently monitored for inaccurate, inappropriate, or derogatory comments, as well as for valid criticisms which are deserving of a thoughtful response.

### ***Use of the On-line ACOEM Membership Directory***

The on-line membership directory in the MyACOEM section of the ACOEM web site (Locate a Member/ Staff box) has much functionality that is often overlooked. By leaving the search for individuals blank and applying the component filter, a current list of all component members can be obtained. Additional filters can be applied to find, for example, the number and names of members who are also members of ACOEM's MRO section. Multi-state components can identify the names and number of members who live in a specific state. This can be useful in government affairs activities. Any member list can be exported to an Excel spreadsheet, and members further sorted by various criteria. This capability can be used, for example, in determining the names and number of members in a specific city. Full utilization of these capabilities can be useful in component communications, as well as other component activities.

## **Chapter IV**

### **MEMBERSHIP RECRUITMENT AND RETENTION**

#### ***Introduction***

Many components do not have active membership recruitment or retention programs, and must (consciously or by default) rely on word of mouth to attract new members and current members to renew their membership without prompting. A survey of ACOEM membership trends and demographics suggests that this approach will **not** be successful over the long term. This chapter describes approaches to attracting and retaining members, thereby allowing a component to stabilize and expand its membership base.

#### ***Recruitment***

Recruitment efforts require a considerable investment of time and effort. Component leaders may question whether this investment is worthwhile. There are in fact a number of reasons to attempt to expand component membership through active recruitment efforts:

- Recruitment efforts are needed to ensure ACOEM’s survival as an organization. The average age of its membership is 55. New members will be needed to replace the current members who will be leaving the field and the organization in the years ahead.
- Beyond a basic stabilization of membership numbers, new members bring new ideas, perspectives, and enthusiasm which can energize a component.
- Recruitment is essentially an invitation to interested professionals to join ACOEM and experience its benefits. These benefits are numerous, and include educational programs specific to occupational and environmental medicine, opportunities to network with others in the field, and opportunities to make a contribution to the profession, to exert influence and leadership in the group, and to achieve professional recognition. Component leaders have experienced many of these benefits. Recruitment offers non-members the opportunity to experience similar benefits.

#### ***Role of the Membership Committee***

As noted, membership recruitment and retention activities can involve the investment of a considerable amount of time. Therefore, it is desirable for a component to have an active membership committee. This approach has several advantages:

1. The workload can be divided among several people, thereby avoiding the all-too-common situation in which one person shoulders the entire load, eventually burns out, and abandons his or her efforts.
2. Recruiting activities are more consistent and less likely to be derailed if unforeseen circumstances force a key individual to reduce or cease his or her involvement with recruitment efforts.
3. The committee benefits from the pooled experience of its members. A committee with several members is more likely to generate innovative approaches to membership recruitment and retention, as well as specific leads for recruitment efforts.
4. Participation on the membership committee (and other committees) can be an effective way to involve component members in the activities of the component (see the second part of this chapter on membership retention).

The membership committee can be appointed by the president and/or Board, or it can be assembled from interested Board members who then invite participation from the general membership. As noted in the Chapter 5, personal invitations to participate are more effective than a general call for volunteers.

### ***Where to Recruit***

Prospective members may be found in a number of settings including:

- Non-member friends, acquaintances, and colleagues who are engaged in the practice of OEM. These individuals may be particularly receptive to personal invitations to join ACOEM.
- Primary care physicians who include OEM activities, such as treatment of on-the-job injuries, DOT physicals, and FAA flight physicals, as a significant part of their practices.
- Physician employees of regional and national OEM providers.
- Corporate medical personnel.
- High-volume workers' compensation providers.
- Providers in specialties which have relevance to OEM. Such specialties include orthopedics, psychiatry, and pulmonary medicine.
- Physician employees of medical centers who provide occupational medicine services to health care personnel in their facilities.
- Residents of OEM and preventive medicine programs deserve particular attention, as these individuals are more likely to become leaders in the profession.
- Faculty of OEM and Preventive Medicine academic and residency programs.
- ACOEM referrals. ACOEM maintains a database that includes past members, course and conference registrants (members and non members), purchasers of and subscribers to ACOEM products, and non-members who have contacted the ACOEM office. This information, which can be broken down by state, will be sent to components on request. Contact the ACOEM Membership Department.

### ***How to Recruit***

There are several approaches to recruiting, and the specific situation will often determine the preferred approach. For example, the approach to an OEM resident will differ from the approach to a family practitioner in a high-volume workers' compensation practice. The following principles and approaches should be kept in mind and tailored to the situation:

- A personal invitation to join a group is more effective than an anonymous appeal, particularly when the invitation is offered by a person known to the prospective member. The membership committee should accordingly involve a component member who knows the prospective candidate. This may require the committee to look beyond its membership and involve a non-committee member in recruitment efforts.
- The individual carrying out the recruiting efforts should be prepared to explain the benefits of ACOEM membership. Membership benefits are found at [www.acoem.org/memberbenefits.aspx](http://www.acoem.org/memberbenefits.aspx). This page can be printed and left with the prospective member. In addition, the benefits of component membership should be explained. These may include local and regional educational events, networking events, government affairs activities, etc. A component may wish to design its own information sheet which describes the benefits of component membership. The ACOEM office will also provide membership material and applications for component societies to use.
- The recruiter's personal story can be especially compelling. It can be useful for this individual to describe why he or she joined ACOEM, and what personal and professional benefits s/he has derived from ACOEM and the component.
- When recruiting prospective members who are employees of large OEM groups or chains of urgent care/OEM clinics, it is often useful to enlist the support of the group's medical director, especially

when that person is an ACOEM member. Advise the medical director that you would like to invite members of the practice to join ACOEM and request a list of the practice's physicians, as well as PAs and ARNPs who are eligible for affiliate membership. This list can be cross checked against ACOEM's data base. Ask if the director has a preference as to how members of the practice are contacted. A presentation at a group's providers meeting may be possible. You may also wish to inquire whether the practice pays for memberships in professional organizations.

- When recruiting OEM or PM residents, enlist the support of the residency director in explaining the benefits of ACOEM membership and encouraging the residents to join. If possible, coordinate efforts with the director by sending membership literature and a letter from the component president or other component leader to the non-member residents, thereby reinforcing the director's message.
- Invite prospective members to component events.
- In communicating with prospective members, be sure to refer them to ACOEM's web site which contains membership information and will also give the prospect a feel for the organization. In addition, the ACOEM membership office will send ACOEM materials to the individuals on request. ACOEM staff also sends information to component societies to display at large meetings and conferences.

### ***Membership Retention***

The retention of component members is arguably more important than the recruitment of new members. This section will describe approaches to member retention. Retention efforts should be targeted to all phases of membership: new members, current members, and non-renewing members.

### ***New Members***

Retention efforts should begin when an individual first joins ACOEM and the component. The president, membership chair, or other designated leader should call the new member and welcome him or her to ACOEM and to the component. The component leaders should attempt to learn something about the new member – what he or she is doing professionally, why he or she joined ACOEM, and what he or she hopes to get out of the organization. The leader should describe volunteer opportunities on the component's committees and, if the new member expresses interest, forward the member's name to the appropriate committee chair. Finally, the component leader should inform the new member of upcoming component and ACOEM activities. It may be useful to follow-up this conversation with a letter or e-mail.

New members may be identified using the current component membership list, which is sent from ACOEM to component leaders every 2 months and on request. This list includes the date each member joined ACOEM. By scanning or sorting the list, new members can be identified.

### ***Current Members***

The key to retaining members is to provide the services they want and/or need. A periodic satisfaction survey may be useful to assess the component's success in this regard. This could be administered via e-mail or an on-line survey instrument. Another key to retention is to involve members in the activities of the component. This topic is addressed in the Chapter 5.

### ***Non-renewing Members***

ACOEM staff sends a list of non-renewing members after the beginning of each year. This list should be reviewed by the component membership committee and all non-renewing members should be contacted. To distribute the workload evenly, the list should be divided among members of the committee.

If possible, the contact should be made by someone who knows the non-renewing member. It may be helpful to involve the component Board of Directors in this effort.

In contacting a non-renewing member, assume that the non-renewal is due to an oversight, recent move, failure of the member's employer to make a timely payment of dues, etc. These situations are in fact the most common reasons for non-renewal and generally a call will facilitate renewal. In cases where a conscious decision not to renew has to do with dissatisfaction with ACOEM or the component, a misconception, or some similar cause, the caller should attempt to remedy the problem. If dissatisfaction is the issue, listen carefully to what is being said, reading between the lines when necessary. Offer to mediate the situation with the proper ACOEM department or component leader. Become an advocate for the member and work to correct the problem if one truly exists. If a misconception is the issue, supply the correct information in a gentle manner. Bring the member up to date as to current aims and activities of the component and ACOEM, especially as these activities may be of benefit to the non-renewing member. After providing the necessary information and/or correcting a problem, suggest reconsideration of membership renewal, and follow-up by telephone at least once as a reminder.

If non-renewal is due to unemployment or other financial or personal issues, special arrangements may be made to keep the physician a member of ACOEM and the component society until the situation is resolved. The member should contact ACOEM's membership department for assistance.

## Chapter V

### MEMBERSHIP INVOLVEMENT AND LEADERSHIP DEVELOPMENT

#### *Introduction*

As noted in Chapter 4, membership recruitment/retention is an important element of component growth and development. It is perhaps even more important to consciously involve members in the activities of the component. The most common reason why members do not become involved is that they are not asked to participate. Therefore, to encourage members to participate in component activities, leaders should:

- Personally contact them.
- Let them know that they, personally, are needed to help.
- Provide the details of how and why they are needed and exactly what they can do to help.

This chapter describes approaches to engaging the members of a component and developing component leadership.

#### *New Members*

New members should be a focus of membership involvement efforts. These efforts begin with the initial contact of a new member as described in Chapter 4. The new member should be welcomed into the component and informed of current opportunities to serve on committees and special projects. Let the new member know that active participation is an excellent way to get to know others in the component, that he or she can select from a range of opportunities according to his or her interests, and that a contribution of even a few hours a month is appreciated. When new members express an interest in a particular activity, their contact information should be forwarded to the appropriate committee chair or other responsible party who should diligently follow up on all such leads. ACOEM identifies new members on the membership lists it sends to component societies.

#### *Inactive Members*

It is the experience of most components that the majority of members do not actively participate in component activities, including meetings. Some of these members will respond positively to a personal invitation. The membership committee may wish to establish a goal of contacting all inactive members during the course of a year to express appreciation for the individual's ongoing membership, to inform the member of component meetings and other events of possible interest, and to invite the member to participate on a committee or other activity of his or her choice. These contacts should ideally be made by a friend or acquaintance the member. The component membership list (available from ACOEM or through the on-line membership directory) should be reviewed by the entire membership committee, and committee members assigned to contact inactive members who are known by them.

#### *Involving ACOEM Fellows*

This group deserves particular attention as ACOEM Fellows have previously demonstrated a strong commitment to the College and may be interested in involvement in component activities. Fellows are identified on the component membership list available on request from ACOEM.

#### *OEM and Preventive Medicine Residents*

These groups are also deserving of special attention, as they are the future leaders in the field. Their time may be limited in the component, but they should be offered an opportunity to participate in

component activities to the extent that their time and interest permit. For example, residents can be asked to introduce speakers at component meetings, or to give brief presentations of their research. Residents who participate in component affairs are more likely to regard ACOEM as “their” organization and remain active throughout their careers. In addition, residents who are active in their components may be able to achieve ACOEM fellowship status early in their careers.

### ***Promoting Leadership***

An important part of component leadership is simply to show up. While books and workshops on leadership development are useful, the process of becoming component leaders primarily involves on-the-job training. Members who are involved in a component’s work will quickly get to know and become known by component leaders, become familiar with the organizational mechanics of the component, and over time serve in a variety of capacities. Component leaders can facilitate this process by inviting members to participate in specific tasks/projects and on committees as outlined above. Additional steps include recognition of a member’s specific contributions, transitioning active members to formal leadership roles, and encouraging qualified members to pursue ACOEM fellowship. These steps are described below.

### ***Recognition***

It is important to recognize the contributions of a component’s active members. Appropriate recognition is genuinely owed to those who contribute; in addition, recognition of a member’s contributions can be tremendously encouraging and motivating, as those who have received a letter of appreciation from a patient or a commendation from one’s employer can testify. There are numerous ways of recognizing the contributions of an individual, committee or work group. Some examples include:

- Informal verbal expressions of thanks and appreciation. These are the easiest and most common forms of recognition.
- Letter of appreciation from an officer or committee chair.
- Mention in the component newsletter.
- Mention at the annual meeting.
- Certificate of appreciation.
- Special recognition or celebration events. For example, a “speakers’ dinner” can be held for component members who volunteer to speak at a component conferences.
- Plaque. This is often awarded to the outgoing component president.
- Awards. Some components have established awards to recognize members who have made significant contributions over time. These awards are given annually and are often named for a prominent early member of the component. An announcement of the award should be submitted to the ACOEM Communications Department for publication in the People and Events section of *JOEM*.

The names of award recipients and the reasons for the awards can be sent to the local newspaper (with or without a photo). This provides publicity for the component as well as for the member recognized.

### ***Board of Director and Officer Nominations***

Components will need to decide on a mechanism of nominating board of director and officer candidates for election by the general membership. Options include:

1. Nominations open to the membership. This is the most democratic method. A disadvantage is the potential for an insufficient number of candidates to be nominated. In addition, if both the nomina-

tions and election occur at the same component membership meeting, there is a possibility of a nominee being caught off guard by a nomination and potentially declining the nomination.

2. A slate of candidates proposed by a nominating committee, one nominee per position. Nominating committees may be composed of current board members and/or others familiar with potential candidates. This approach allows the nominating committee sufficient time to ascertain the interest of possible nominees in serving in board and officer positions. In addition, a slate of candidates which represents a variety of viewpoints, professional activities (clinical, academic, administrative, etc.), and geographic locations can be constructed. Disadvantages include the potential for a leadership clique to develop and a perception that the Board has total control of the outcome of elections. These concerns can be mitigated somewhat by allowing nominations of other candidates from the general membership prior to the election.
3. A slate of candidates proposed by the nominating committee, multiple nominees per position. This represents a compromise between the first two options. Nominations from the general membership can also be accepted.

### ***Election or Appointment to the ACOEM House of Delegates***

Component delegates represent the component's interests to the House, and have an important liaison role with the national organization as described in Chapters 1 and 6. This position may be elected or appointed, depending on component bylaws. Candidates should be able to commit to attending the spring HOD meeting at AOHC and the fall meeting at ACOEM headquarters near Chicago. The latter meeting may be attended electronically. This position will be of particular interest to members who wish to become involved with the national organization, as it provides an opportunity to meet and work with ACOEM members and leaders from across the nation. Many current ACOEM leaders began their service to the national organization in the HOD.

### ***ACOEM Fellowship***

ACOEM fellowship is the highest classification of membership in ACOEM, and is intended to distinguish and recognize members of the College for their training, accomplishments, and experience in occupational medicine. It is a mark of professional distinction, and a prerequisite to serving in many leadership positions in ACOEM. Component leaders, especially current fellows, should encourage active component members to pursue fellowship. Component leaders can assist interested members by encouraging and facilitating participation in component activities, including service on committees, service as a board member or officer, or involvement as a House of Delegates representative. These activities are regarded favorably by the Committee of Fellowship Examiners. Documentation of the member's activities should be maintained by the component. In addition, component leaders, particularly current fellows, can support fellowship applications by writing letters of recommendation for the candidate. Current fellowship requirements can be found on the ACOEM web site at [www.acoem.org/becomingafellow.aspx](http://www.acoem.org/becomingafellow.aspx).

### ***Further Resources***

Component leaders and members may wish to further develop their leadership abilities. A number of opportunities are available and can include leadership courses and workshops offered by state medical associations, educational institutions, and business schools. These offerings may include on-line and distance-learning options. Physicians who work for corporations, hospitals, or large groups may find also useful offerings through their employers. In addition, numerous books exist on leadership topics.

## CHAPTER VI

### INTERACTIONS WITH ACOEM HEADQUARTERS

#### **Introduction**

A component will have regular contact with the national organization. Interactions will actually occur with two parts of the organization – the paid staff at ACOEM Headquarters which supports the organization, and the elected leadership.

#### **Interactions with ACOEM Staff**

ACOEM staff is responsible for the day-to-day activities and transactions necessary to support the organization. Examples include maintaining membership information, collecting dues and distributing the appropriate portion to components, arranging AOHC and other ACOEM-sponsored educational meetings (making hotel arrangements, publicizing the meeting, producing meeting brochures, etc.), and answering questions from members and others. A component's interactions with the staff will generally pertain to established programs and procedures. Typical interactions and transactions are addressed elsewhere in this manual, and include the following:

- Submission of the annual component report by January 31 to ACOEM staff.
- Remittance of dues to components.
- Notifying the ACOEM Membership Department of proposed component dues changes by August 1.
- Quarterly conference calls with component presidents.
- Occasional conference calls with the ACOEM Executive Director and component executive staff.
- Applications for joint sponsorship of continuing medical education (CME).
- Items for inclusion in People and Events section of the *Journal of Occupational and Environmental Medicine*, due at least 4 to 5 months prior to publication date.
- Requests for attendance by ACOEM president at annual component meeting. Notify ACOEM staff as soon as meeting dates are known.
- Assistance with and/or review with staff the fiscal implications of House of Delegates resolutions.
- Nominations for ACOEM annual awards (Kehoe, Knudsen, etc.). The membership is notified via blast e-mail or *ACOEM E-News* or both of the nomination deadline, generally 6 to 7 months prior to AOHC.
- Updated component membership lists sent to components, periodically and upon request.
- Deadline for submission of HOD resolutions, generally 4 to 6 weeks prior to meeting.

#### **ACOEM Staff Contacts**

The primary contact person for components is the ACOEM Executive Coordinator. For membership issues, components may call the Membership Department at 847-818-1800, ext. 300. An abbreviated staff list may be found on the ACOEM web site at [www.acoem.org/StaffDirectory.aspx](http://www.acoem.org/StaffDirectory.aspx), and a complete list in the Members Only section at [www.acoem.org/staff.aspx](http://www.acoem.org/staff.aspx).

#### **Interactions with Elected ACOEM Leadership**

In contrast to communication with ACOEM staff, which often involves established practices and procedures, interaction with elected ACOEM leadership frequently concerns the strategic direction of the College, proposals for new initiatives, and other “big picture” issues. Forums for such communication include the all component conference calls, House of Delegates meetings, informal discussion with ACOEM directors and officers, and component meetings which the ACOEM president or designee attends.

### **All Component Conference Calls**

ACOEM's president and executive director host quarterly calls with component leaders. It is important that each component be represented on these calls by an officer or member of their leadership. The calls are designed to focus on OEM issues of special concern to components and their members at the highest leadership levels. Component societies are asked to contribute their particular items in advance of the meeting so that other components may be aware of them and prepared to join the discussion. Members of the House of Delegates are invited to join these calls.

### **House of Delegates (HOD)**

The House of Delegates (HOD) is the primary body through which components formally interact with the ACOEM leadership. The HOD, composed of delegates from ACOEM components and sections, meets just prior to AOHC and in early November. A primary function of the HOD is to consider and vote on resolutions. Resolutions approved by the HOD are sent to the ACOEM Board of Directors for further consideration and, if approved by the Board, implemented.

Components can influence the activities and direction of ACOEM through the resolution process. A resolution may be submitted by a component, ACOEM member, or section. Component resolutions should be approved by the component's Board of Directors. The deadline for submission is usually 4 weeks prior to HOD meetings. Resolutions can be submitted by logging into MyACOEM and going to the "Submit a Resolution to HOD" in the HOD box (widget); resolutions are forwarded to the HOD Speaker for assignment to a work group. The work group, essentially a committee of the HOD, considers the resolutions assigned to it and presents them to the HOD with comments/recommendations. As noted, resolutions approved by the HOD are sent to the ACOEM Board for approval. For a more complete review of the HOD, see ACOEM By-laws, Article IX, at [www.acoem.org/ByLaws.aspx](http://www.acoem.org/ByLaws.aspx) or [www.acoem.org/Governance/HouseofDelegates.aspx](http://www.acoem.org/Governance/HouseofDelegates.aspx) or [www.acoem.org/hodstructure.aspx](http://www.acoem.org/hodstructure.aspx). The latter site contains a PDF of the HOD Manual which includes a chapter on the "Evolution of a Resolution" that describes the process and provides instructions for drafting a resolution. Assistance may also be obtained from the component's HOD delegates.

HOD meetings also include reports from the ACOEM president, treasurer, and executive director. These reports contain valuable information regarding the state and direction of the College. To keep the component leadership informed of developments at ACOEM, a member of the component's delegation should summarize this information and convey it to component leadership. The delegate's summary should be based on the official minutes or meeting summary (posted in MyACOEM under House of Delegates).

### **Informal Discussions with ACOEM Leaders**

Informal discussion with ACOEM directors, officers, and staff is a useful preliminary step when developing a formal HOD resolution. ACOEM representatives may have important input as to the appropriateness, feasibility, and/or timeliness of a proposal.

### **Presidential Visits to Component Meetings**

Components may wish to invite the ACOEM president to their annual component meeting. If the president is unavailable, another officer or ACOEM representative may be identified. This affords the opportunity for component members to hear directly from the ACOEM leadership, and for the president (or designee) to speak with component members. ACOEM presidents attending component meeting are typically invited to participate in the component Board meeting which occurs in conjunction with the annual meeting, schedules permitting. This topic is also discussed in Chapter 7.

## CHAPTER VII MEETINGS AND CONFERENCES

### **Introduction**

Meetings/conferences are vital component offerings. They provide opportunities to members to acquire knowledge and continuing medical education (CME), exchange ideas and information, and establish professional and personal connections. There is a wide variety of meeting types among components, ranging from occasional lunch meetings to multi-day conferences. This chapter describes the various types of meetings and encourages discussion as to whether a component's current meeting style is effective or whether changes would be beneficial.

### **Elements of a Successful Meeting**

Three elements of a successful meeting include:

1. *Educational content.* Content, with or without CME credit, should be largely if not entirely devoted to the field of occupational and environmental medicine (OEM).
2. *Networking opportunities.* With the proliferation of inexpensive on-line CME, a component cannot rely solely on the educational content of its meetings to attract participants. Another important aspect is the opportunity for participants to network with other OEM practitioners. Effective meetings provide ample time for networking.
3. *Social activities.* Closely related to networking is simply having fun. More than one component has experienced a transformation of its meetings when it focused on providing enjoyable social activities for meeting participants.

### **Types of Meetings**

*Lunch or Dinner Meetings* – These usually include a meeting, informal discussion, meal, and speaker, in a restaurant with a banquet room or other meeting space. These meetings have the advantage of being relatively easy to arrange and are particularly well suited to components that are just beginning to set up meetings, and those whose membership is concentrated in a small geographic area. They are also useful to components with large geographic areas and multiple population centers. Local lunch or dinner meetings can supplement less frequent meetings that involve the entire component. The speaker may be a member of the component or a local specialist in an allied field (orthopedics, psychiatry, industrial hygiene, etc.).

*Half- to One-Day Meetings* – This length of time is common for component-wide meetings. It allows for more interaction and networking time than lunch or dinner meetings. Because adequate meeting space is needed, these meetings are often held in a hotel meeting room. Such meetings usually take place on a Friday or Saturday, thereby minimizing out of office time for participants.

*Multi-Day Meetings* – These offer the greatest opportunity for education, networking, and social activities, but benefits must be weighed against costs as such meetings tend to be more expensive for the component and/or participants, and require more time to plan and implement. They typically occur at a hotel and meeting space and room rates are often negotiated with the hotel as a package. The hotel charges a penalty for unfilled rooms. Meeting organizers need to be aware of this and exercise appropriate caution in estimating the number of rooms that will be required.

### **Timing of Meetings**

While components have considerable latitude in scheduling meetings, a few times should be avoided:

- Meetings around the time of major holidays (national, local, religious).
- Meetings from mid-May through Labor Day tend to conflict with graduations and vacation schedules.
- Meetings should not be scheduled around the time of AOHC. AOHC dates may be found at [www.acoem.org/educational\\_conferences.aspx](http://www.acoem.org/educational_conferences.aspx).
- Meetings should not be scheduled when ACOEM has its summer, fall, and winter Board or House meetings. The summer Board meeting is generally the last weekend in July; the fall Board and HOD meetings are usually the first weekend in November; and the winter meeting the first week in February. (ACOEM Board meetings are scheduled at least one year in advance and can be confirmed with ACOEM staff at any time.)
- Conflicts with ACOEM offerings in a component's geographic area should also be avoided. It is advisable to contact the ACOEM office for information regarding future plans for such meetings.

### ***Joint Meetings***

Components may wish to explore alliances with other occupational health and safety or medical organizations in order to jointly present a meeting. Potential partners include local components, chapters, and sections of the American Association of Occupational Health Nurses and the American Industrial Hygiene Association as well as other medical specialty organizations such as the American Academy of Family Practice, American College of Physicians, and American Academy of Orthopedic Surgeons. State medical associations and county medical societies are other possible partners. Such alliances may create useful synergies. The format of joint meetings may include combinations of:

- Plenary sessions, with both groups meeting together to hear presentations of mutual interest.
- Concurrent sessions, with presentations of primary interest to members of one of the sponsoring organizations.
- Consecutive meetings. The component may hold its activities the day immediately before or after a meeting of, for example, a state medical association.

Joint meetings may be of particular interest to components that wish to expand offerings from a partial or full-day format to a multi-date format. By affiliating with a group that has an existing multi-day format, a component can take advantage of the other organization's experience in planning and executing larger meetings. In exchange, the other organization's meeting will be enhanced by the attendance of component members and the ideas, experience, and perspectives they bring to the meeting. The responsibilities of each organization with respect to meeting planning, organization, and administration, including hotel arrangements, publicity, and CME, should be clearly delineated in advance via a written agreement.

### ***Continuing Medical Education Hours***

The Accreditation Council for Continuing Medical Education (ACCME) [www.accme.org](http://www.accme.org), is the body that accredits organizations and institutions that wish to offer CME. This accreditation process is time-consuming and expensive, and is not practical for most components. However, non-accredited organizations may offer CME by entering into a joint sponsorship arrangement with an accredited entity approved for such arrangements.

CME hours may be awarded through a joint sponsorship arrangement between ACOEM and the component or with another accredited provider such as a medical center, university, or other accredited organization, usually in the component's local area. Components interested in joint sponsorship through ACOEM are urged to review the joint sponsorship application at the outset of the planning process. This document

is available at [www.acoem.org/jointsponsorshipapp.aspx](http://www.acoem.org/jointsponsorshipapp.aspx). The ACOEM application and joint sponsorship process is quite rigorous before, during, and after the educational activity, requires considerable background documentation, and the initial application must be completed at least 90 days in advance of the educational activity. It is therefore essential to identify educational topics and secure speakers **well in advance** of an educational activity.

After the application has been received and reviewed, ACOEM staff will work with the component contact person to insure all ACCME requirements are met. It will be necessary for the component to identify at least one individual who is prepared to be fully responsible for providing documentation and information to ACOEM as required and on time. Current, specific policies, rules, guidelines and fees (if any), which may change from time to time, can be found on the ACOEM web site under the Education tab, or by contacting the ACOEM Education Department, [educationinfo@acoem.org](mailto:educationinfo@acoem.org).

### ***Maintenance of Certification Credit***

Maintenance is certification (MOC) credit is one of the requirements of recertification by the American Board of Preventive Medicine, and is therefore of relevance to a growing number of ACOEM members. For components in a joint CME sponsorship arrangement with ACOEM, ACOEM staff is available to work with the component to provide MOC as well as CME for component educational activities.

### ***Commercial Support of Educational Activities***

Currently, joint sponsorship will not be offered by ACOEM if commercial support (support from a commercial interest as defined by the ACCME) is received for the educational activity. Components may rent exhibition space to vendors as long as it is in a space separate from where CME content is offered, and may charge a fee for advertisements in meeting brochures if the advertisement does not appear in the content/CME portion of the brochure. ACOEM staff should be contacted with any concerns or questions regarding definitions, appropriateness of arrangements, agreements, or proposed transactions with commercial entities. These policies may change from time to time and components should consult the ACOEM web site or Education Department staff before proceeding with plans for any commercial support.

### ***Presentations by the ACOEM President***

Many components invite ACOEM's president to give a presentation at the annual component meeting. This affords members an opportunity to hear directly from the president, and for the president to engage members at the grassroots level. If such a visit is of interest, the ACOEM Executive Coordinator should be notified as soon as the conference dates are set. ACOEM will pay for the president's travel expenses (air and ground). The component is responsible for meals and lodging.

### ***Administering Educational Programs***

Administering an educational program consists of the allocation/assignment of the following resources:

- Human resources
- Financial resources
- Facilities resources
- Leadership resources
- Time resources

Generally, not all of these are considered when administering a program, but each is important and necessary to the success of the overall educational program. Allocation and adjustment of these resources will occur on an ongoing basis throughout the planning and implementation of an educational program.

**Human Resources** – Human resources refer to staffing the educational activity. Generally, there will be administrative staff (paid or unpaid, but someone in that role), teaching staff, and on-site management staff. In some cases, one person may wear more than one hat, but that can be a good way to burn out volunteers. Administrative work consists of the planning of the educational activity, seeing that it is delivered appropriately, and doing all the follow-up work. Planning an educational activity consists of:

- Conceptualizing it;
- Designing it;
- Lining up educational facilitators;
- Selecting and working with a hotel or similar facility;
- Interacting with the ACOEM office for joint sponsorship (if desired);
- Marketing the program;
- Preparing or ordering all of the meeting materials (badges, packets, syllabi, hand-outs, evaluation forms and non-print resources, such as audiovisual materials), and;
- Arranging for the smooth running of the program on site.

Ensuring that a program is delivered appropriately on site means working with staff assigned to the activity at all times and serving as chief trouble-shooter. This could mean adjusting room temperatures, handling registration problems, fixing audio-visual equipment, soothing ruffled feathers, etc.

Follow-up work involves three things:

1. Handling all evaluation materials to make certain they are usable for the joint sponsorship report and for future educational planning groups;
2. Paying all bills and stipends, and sending appropriate “thank you” correspondence, and;
3. Completing all ACOEM joint sponsorship paperwork (if this is a jointly sponsored activity).

*Human Resources: Faculty* – Usually, the education planner will not also serve as faculty. Faculty selection is dependent on the program objectives. Thus, this administrative task will most likely be addressed after the basic learning objectives have been written and before the educational design has been selected. At times it is appropriate to draw on the resources of the group, while at other times an outside speaker or facilitator can be utilized. Overall, a balance is probably best for the program.

While the selection of faculty will depend upon the program objectives, there are also other practical considerations, including availability and budgetary concerns. Deciding on faculty is a great committee decision, as consensus here helps to alleviate problems elsewhere later.

After faculty is identified and invited to speak, an invitation packet is sent that includes:

- A letter of invitation recapping and confirming the invitation to speak.
- An agreement form detailing the specific faculty duties and the financial reimbursement.
- A request for audiovisual and/or other special equipment needs.
- Forms and information required by ACOEM (or another CME provider) for joint sponsorship.

Approximately two weeks before the meeting, all details should be reconfirmed with the faculty. A contact person and a telephone number for any last minute emergencies should be provided. The on-site meeting coordinator should make the faculty feel welcome and provide basic information (point out washroom locations, etc.), as well as specific technical information (how to operate AV equipment, etc.).

**Human Resources: On-Site Staff** – Depending on the size of the activity, there may be only one on-site staff person working the meeting. However, if the activity is large, volunteers may be recruited from the membership and/or hired from the hotel. If paid hotel staff is utilized, a meeting with them should be planned prior to the start of the activity in order to brief them on what type of a meeting it is, who will be attending, and what they need to do. If responsibilities are extensive and/or complex, the staff should be provided with written instructions in addition to the discussion.

**Financial Resources** – Setting up a budget and making it work can be a tedious procedure. It is most important to decide first of all if the educational program is to make money or if it is to operate on a break-even basis. Even if a component chooses the latter, it should plan for some margin of profit in order to avoid an unexpected shortfall. Almost all component programs are sponsored on a tuition fee basis, and setting the tuition correctly is of utmost necessity.

The only realistic type of budget to use for planning an educational activity is a line-item budget. Two lists are made – one of fixed expenses for the program, and one of variable expenses. For the sake of an example, consider developing a budget for a one-day educational program.

Below is a list of expenses that may be encountered when planning an educational activity. Use this list to determine your break-even point.

ACTIVITY	COSTS
Room rental	
Use of AV	
Projected speaker expenses ( <i>speakers are local and require mileage only</i> )	
Projected honoraria per speaker	
Projected volunteer travel cost	
Brochure development, printing, and postage	
Promotional activities	
Syllabus/Handouts	
Continental breakfast	
AM coffee break	
Luncheon, including tip	
PM Soda break	

The next step is to project a tuition cost based on comparable programs and an estimate of what the market would bear. Then, use the following formula to determine how many participants will be needed to “break even” with the program.

$$\text{Fixed Cost} \div (\text{Average Tuition Cost} - \text{Variable Cost per Person}) = \text{Break-Even Number of Registrants}$$

Profits can be put into the component’s treasury for other purposes or used for the following:

1. Use more or more costly speakers.
2. Upgrade the meal functions (**not recommended**).
3. Provide a more extensive syllabus and/or handouts.

Similarly, if the break-even number is more than the number projected to attend, adjustments will need to be made to lower the costs (negotiating down the honorarium, eliminating a refreshment break, etc.).

This analysis becomes more complex in the case of multi-day meetings where it is common to reserve a block of hotel rooms at a negotiated rate. If the block does not fill, a penalty is typically assessed, which makes it important to estimate attendance as accurately as possible. Allowances will need to be made for attendees who choose to stay at less expensive nearby hotels and for local members who will commute from home. Inquire of or negotiate with the hotel as to whether the penalty can be reduced or eliminated by releasing the room block prior to the beginning of the meeting. This will also encourage members to solidify their plans to attend the meeting at an earlier date.

*Facilities Resources* – Many components get into a rut, albeit a comfortable one, of always using the same meeting site. This has both advantages and disadvantages, but being open to all types of locations and facilities might help to keep component meetings fresh. Here are some questions to consider:

- Where are the majority of the members located?
- What type of facilities does the component generally prefer? Resort settings? Downtown hotels? University hospitals? Would the group be open to something new and different?
- Do component members tend to be frugal or extravagant with their tastes?

Answering these questions will provide a start on the selection possibilities. Accurate records of past activities will help here too.

Once a facility has been selected, the room lay-out (or room lay-outs in the case of a multi-room meeting) should be considered, based on the learning objectives and educational design. The most commonly used seating arrangements are the auditorium style and the classroom style, but depending upon the learning objectives and educational methods, other set-ups may be far more beneficial. Generally, seating patterns are governed by the amount of interaction that is planned between the faculty and the participants, and among the participants themselves. As active learners generally learn and retain more than passive ones, fostering interaction at all levels is most often a positive thing to do.

*Leadership Resources* – Leadership is not often considered as a resource, but without it not much happens. Meeting organizers are perceived as leaders, and as they carry out their duties as educational meeting planners, they should be alert to other component members to whom they can teach their skills. Mentoring others is an important part of being a professional, and component leaders have a unique opportunity to assist others to become leaders.

*Time Resources* – Time is one of the most important resources. Meeting organizers have many responsibilities in addition to being a busy physicians and component leaders. Organizing time, rather than trying to “save time,” is the key. If a brush up in this area is needed, the time management section of Covey’s *Seven Habits of Highly Successful People* is an excellent place to begin, but no matter what is read or tried, chances are that meeting planners will benefit from it. A good idea here and a short-cut there can make all of the difference in the world!

*Creating Workable Program Agendas* – Mapping out the activities for a given time period isn’t hard, but don’t forget the little details such as break and restroom times, time to move from one meeting room to a break-out session, etc. These times must be built into the schedule for things to run smoothly. As a general

rule, a 15-minute break should be planned every two hours or so. But remember, CME is only granted for time spent in the educational activity; networking doesn't count even though it is very valuable.

*Marketing the Program* – Marketing the educational program is crucial. Many of the communications tools described in Chapter 3 will be useful in publicizing the program. In addition, it may be beneficial to market the meeting to allied organizations (i.e., local/regional chapters or sections of the AAOHN and AIHA). This can be done by requesting mailing and/or e-mail lists from the local organizations, or asking the leadership of these organizations to send e-mails to their members that contain attached meeting programs and registration forms or links to these documents.

*Post-Meeting Activities* – It is useful to have a debriefing immediately following the program, when impressions are still fresh. The organizing committee should attend, of course, and interested program attendees can also be invited. The purpose of this meeting is to identify the aspects of the program that went well (and why), the aspects of the meeting that did not go well (and why), and what improvements can be made in future activities. Ideas for the following year's program can also be discussed in a very preliminary fashion. It is important to have a designated note-taker at this meeting, otherwise these fresh thoughts and impressions will be forgotten. A copy of the notes should be provided to the organizers of the following year's meeting.

Post-meeting paperwork will also need to be completed, particularly if there is joint sponsorship of CME through an accredited provider such as ACOEM. This will also serve an evaluative purpose, and in addition will provide part of the needs assessment for future activities.

## CHAPTER VIII GOVERNMENT AFFAIRS

### *Introduction*

ACOEM is active in the government affairs arena at the national level, primarily through its Public Affairs Council and its Director of Government Relations. Components typically focus on state (and occasionally local) issues. The degree of a component's involvement and the nature of its activities will depend on its resources and member interests. Article III, Section 2(g)(iv) of the ACOEM Bylaws requires components to have processes in place that keep component members and ACOEM aware of matters of interest to occupational medicine physicians that take place within the component's territory. Therefore, at a minimum, components should monitor relevant legislative and other government affairs activities and communicate significant developments to component members and to ACOEM. This chapter describes approaches to this task as well as to other activities that a component may wish to consider.

In carrying out government affairs activities, components should also be mindful of two considerations:

1. Component members have a wide range of viewpoints and perspectives. For example, component members may include university faculty, corporate medical directors from a variety of industries, employees of government agencies, physician employees of hospitals and large medical groups, and proprietors of solo or small group practices who are thus small business owners as well as physicians. Government affairs committees and component boards should be aware of this diversity of viewpoints, target for advocacy those proposals that have the broad support of component membership, and beware of taking positions on issues that may be unnecessarily divisive. Proposed government activities and positions should be approved by the board of directors or executive committee, which should ideally be composed of members with a variety of backgrounds and perspectives.
2. Components that are recognized as 501(c)(3) nonprofits have significant restrictions imposed on their government affairs activities. For example, they cannot endorse or oppose (or appear to endorse or oppose) candidates for public office, and, while they may express opinions regarding legislation, attempts to influence legislation (lobbying) cannot constitute a substantial part of their overall activities. Failure to comply with these restrictions can result in loss of tax-exempt status. 501(c)(3) components that are engaged in government affairs activities are encouraged to review IRS guidance and, if necessary, consult a qualified tax advisor.

### *Forming a Government Affairs Committee*

As is the case of many component functions, government affairs activities are best carried out by a dedicated committee of interested members. This will allow for a division of the workload and ideally for representation of a variety of opinions and perspectives. In the case of multistate components, the committee will optimally include at least one member from each state.

As will be discussed later, it is often valuable to partner with state medical associations (SMAs). For this reason, it is useful for the committee to include one or more SMA members. It may be necessary to canvass the component membership for interested SMA members and invite their participation on the committee. Alternatively, the component may wish to subsidize a SMA membership for a committee member who is willing to represent the interests of the component to the SMA, foster a working relationship between the SMA and the component, and utilize the resources of the SMA as appropriate.

The committee will want to meet formally, perhaps by teleconference, at least 2 or 3 times a year, and maintain focused minutes of such meetings. Committees that are closely involved with legislative affairs may wish to meet more frequently during the active session of the state legislature. During these periods, a brief informal teleconference as often as once a week can be helpful to keep the committee on track.

After the committee has been established, it may engage in any of a number of activities. The choice of activities will depend on state-specific circumstances, the interests of committee members, and the resources of the component. The remainder of this chapter will describe examples of such activities.

### ***Identifying Key Issues***

As a proactive step, the government affairs committee may choose to list the kinds of issues that it will address, typically the issues in occupational and environmental medicine that are important to the component's members. Preparing and ratifying such an issues list will typically be done with the consent of the component's full Board of Directors.

Legislative and regulatory issues that may be of interest to the component include:

- 1) Workers' compensation procedures and other rules
- 2) Issues related to medical fee schedules, or billing and coding requirements
- 3) Issues related to scope of practice in the area of occupational and environmental medicine affecting physicians and other health care providers, including nurse practitioners, physician's assistants, acupuncturists, chiropractors, and others.
- 4) Funding for occupational or environmental clinics, and for graduate medical education in occupational and environmental medicine.
- 5) Disability evaluations and fitness-for-duty issues.
- 6) Environmental regulations related to human exposures to chemical or physical agents, including pesticides, air and water pollutants, hazardous materials and hazardous wastes.
- 7) Regulations affecting state OSHA plans.
- 8) Broader public health issues with an environmental component (such as land use issues, the built environment, global climate change, and others).

As ACOEM may have already done relevant research and staked out a position on certain issues of concern, components should always visit ACOEM's Public Affairs web site ([www.acoem.org/PublicAffairs.aspx](http://www.acoem.org/PublicAffairs.aspx)) and review ACOEM official position papers and public comments. If a component states a position perceived to be at odds with an established ACOEM position, communication problems could ensue.

### ***Developing an Advocacy Agenda***

Once the government affairs committee has developed its list of issues to track, it can be helpful for the committee to prepare a brief white paper, or advocacy agenda, typically not to exceed two pages, which serves as a wish list of legislative or regulatory changes. The advocacy agenda may then be printed on component letterhead and circulated to a variety of audiences, including component members, elected officials, and key administrative staff in state government.

### ***Tracking and Influencing Legislation***

A key function of a government affairs committee is to identify pending legislation that is relevant to the component and to track its progress through the legislative process. These activities can be time-

consuming and strategies for keeping up to date vary by state. An exploration of the state legislature's web site will likely be fruitful, as many legislatures have tracking tools, including e-mail notifications when the status of a bill changes. In addition, the state medical association and some medical specialty societies will already be tracking bills that are relevant to medical practice. Developing a working relationship with these associations can help to limit the amount of work to be done by the component.

Most state legislatures introduce new bills annually, although some are on a two-year legislative cycle. The state legislature may be in session for only a few months of each year, during which the progress of bills in committee, or on the floor of a legislative chamber, might be influenced by input from constituents. Such input can take the form of contact with elected officials or with their staff legislative analysts, or testimony at a legislative or administrative hearing.

During the critical period of the legislative session when bills are under active consideration, the component's government affairs committee should review relevant bills and decide which bills deserve further attention. Of course, there may be some legislative sessions in which very few bills merit committee attention. Committee members will want to read each relevant bill and form an opinion as to its merit with regard to the component. It can be helpful to get more information about the intent or impact of the bill from the elected official who sponsored the legislation, or from the SMA.

After reviewing each bill, the committee will typically choose one of the following 5 options regarding its position on a particular bill:

1. Support;
2. Support if amended;
3. Watch;
4. Oppose unless amended; or
5. Oppose.

Note: bills can change substantially as they progress through various steps in the legislative process, particularly bills that may have been introduced only as placeholders or "spot bills" which are intended by their authors to be amended after introduction. After deciding on its position on relevant bills, the committee will make a tactical decision about action steps, usually with the concurrence of the component board or executive committee. Action steps will typically be much more effective if coordinated with advocacy efforts from the state medical association or other medical societies. On occasion, ACOEM's Public Affairs Council or Director of Government Relations may be able to provide support.

Action steps might include:

- Letters of support or opposition to the bill's authors, or to a key legislator such as the chair of a key legislative committee, perhaps with suggested changes to improve the bill.
- Telephone calls or letters to other legislators whose constituents are members of the component; such contacts are often best made by a physician who is a constituent of the legislator.
- An offer to testify at a legislative hearing, if any is being held.
- Letters to local newspaper editors outlining the issues involved and the component's position.

### ***Tracking and Influencing Regulations***

The component may also want to track relevant administrative regulations, which are written by a state regulatory agency to further the intent of legislation. Keeping abreast of pending regulations can be

difficult, and procedures for each state will be different. However, regulatory agencies, which ultimately are under the control of the governor of the state, are generally required on request to notify interested persons about regulatory updates. For example, the component might ask to be placed on a notification list for new regulations related to the state workers' compensation system, and thereafter would receive automatic notices about newly proposed regulations. Some agencies offer e-mail notification systems on their web sites.

When new administrative regulations are proposed, the regulatory agency will typically be required to post a comment period, during which interested parties can provide written comments or testimony at hearings that may be scheduled. Again, if the component chooses to provide to provide comments or testimony, it can be very helpful to coordinate these with the state medical society.

### ***Communicating with Component Members***

The government affairs committee should periodically communicate with component members regarding its work. Such communication can include information regarding pending legislation as well as requests for members to send letters of support or opposition to their legislators regarding the legislation, or to send public comments to agencies that are promulgating regulations. Component members can also be invited to submit any concerns regarding proposed legislation or regulations to the committee. E-mail communication is usually more convenient. Multi-state components may wish to construct state-specific e-mail lists, using appropriate filters on the ACOEM membership directory.

### ***Communicating with ACOEM***

Reports of significant state legislative and regulatory activities should be made to ACOEM as they may benefit other components with similar problems and can result in modifications to ACOEM's advocacy agenda. It is also sometimes appropriate to request ACOEM's assistance with legislative issues. Such assistance may be provided by ACOEM's Council on Public Affairs and/or its Director of Government Relations. Requests for assistance, as well as more routine information sharing, should be directed to ACOEM Headquarters. Callers will be referred to the appropriate staff member.

### ***Interacting with State Medical Associations (SMAs)***

Because many SMAs already have staff and volunteers dedicated to influencing legislation and regulations, it is often helpful to partner with these associations. Such collaboration might be through an association's council of delegates and/or legislative committee or through periodic communication with association staff including lobbyists. The advocacy agenda, described earlier in this chapter, may be a useful communications tool. However, it is possible that the SMA will require that collaboration be carried out by component members who are also members of the SMA.

These interactions allow the component to obtain information regarding the SMA's government affairs and legislative activities, to provide input to the SMA regarding issues of importance to OEM, and to coordinate government affairs activities with the SMA. In addition, the interests of the component and the field of OEM can be represented to other segments of the SMA, often through participation on the SMA's Interspecialty Council or similar body.

### ***Hiring a Lobbyist***

The hiring of a lobbyist is perhaps the most complex and costly action a component can take and is likely beyond the capabilities of most components. This action must be consistent with the component's

incorporation documents. A component structured as a 501(c)(6) corporation can legally hire a lobbyist, but may not be able to do so if it is structured as a 501(c)(3). A component may thus be required to revise its corporate structure in order to take this action. Some organizations have launched separate fund-raising activities to support the hiring of a lobbyist. Contributions to the component for this purpose will not be tax-deductible for the donor.

The decision to hire a lobbyist is a significant step for a component with a modest annual budget, and depends on the judgement of the component Board that such expenditure is a priority for members. Potential candidates for this position include individuals who are already employed as lobbyists for other medical societies. If a component chooses to hire its own lobbyist, the component Board should execute a signed contract with the lobbyist and require a disclosure statement from the lobbyist about other parties or interests that he or she represents, in order to look for possible conflicts of interest.

### ***Relationships with State Government Agencies***

In addition to engaging in legislative and regulatory issues, the government affairs committee may wish to develop contacts with key individuals in state agencies that are relevant to occupational and environmental medicine, such as the agencies that administer the state occupational safety and health and workers' compensation programs. It is particularly useful to establish relationships with the medical directors of such programs. Often these individuals are members of ACOEM (or can be invited to join). They can provide valuable information regarding the activities of their agencies, and may be willing to give presentations at component meetings on topics of interest to OEM providers.

### ***Resources***

- The IRS web site contains several pages concerning restricted and prohibited activities. Government affairs committees and Boards of 501(c)(3) components are encouraged to explore these pages. Two places to start are [www.irs.gov/charities/article/0,,id=163392,00.html](http://www.irs.gov/charities/article/0,,id=163392,00.html) – regarding lobbying, and [www.irs.gov/charities/charitable/article/0,,id=163395,00.html](http://www.irs.gov/charities/charitable/article/0,,id=163395,00.html) – about candidates for public office.
- ACOEM's Public Affairs web page ([www.acoem.org/governmentrelations.aspx](http://www.acoem.org/governmentrelations.aspx)) is nationally oriented and includes links to position and guidance statements, press releases, and public comments. As noted earlier, this material may help inform a component's positions on government affairs issues. This page also contains a link to the State Relations web page ([www.acoem.org/StateRelations.aspx](http://www.acoem.org/StateRelations.aspx)) which contains links to state government news and other resources.
- Educational sessions relating to government affairs are commonly offered at AOHC.
- State medical associations may provide training and workshops relating to government affairs. Attendees should be aware that this training may include activities that are permissible for political action committees affiliated with the medical association, but are prohibited or restricted for 501(c)(3)s.
- The web sites of two organizations oriented towards state government include extensive news as well as research of public policy issues. The Council of State Governments ([www.csg.org](http://www.csg.org)) has information with a national scope as well as links to regional information. The intended audience includes members of the legislative, executive, and judicial branches of state governments. The Conference of State Legislatures ([www.ncsl.org](http://www.ncsl.org)) is focused on state legislators and their staffs. The majority of the information on both of these web sites is not relevant to OEM; thus, exploration of the web sites will be required to locate any information of interest.