

# ACP Board of Governors Resolutions Guide for ACP Members

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# Overview

## Why does ACP have a Resolutions Process?

The Board of Governors (BOG) Resolutions Process was instituted in 1985 as a means for the ACP membership to have formal input to the Board of Regents (BOR), the policymaking body of the College. A resolution reflects the grassroots voice of ACP.

## What is a resolution?

A resolution is a proposal that asks ACP to take a position and/or an action. Any ACP member can submit a resolution to his/her ACP Governor for consideration by the local chapter council. ACP international members without a designated chapter should direct potential resolution topics to the ACP Global Engagement Committee for consideration. A resolution consists of at least one directive ("Resolved clause") accompanied by supporting statements ("Whereas clauses").

Resolutions may also be initiated by a national committee, council, or BOG Class.

# Six Phases of the Resolutions Process



## Pre-BOG Meeting

*Eight Months Prior*—The “Call for Resolutions” is posted in *I.M. Matters Weekly from ACP*, on ACP Online’s home page, and on the Chapter web site Advocacy page, encouraging members to submit resolutions. Members must submit resolutions at the local level, to their Governor, no later than six months prior to the BOG meeting.

*Six Months Prior*—Resolutions from members are due to the chapter. This is when Governors should begin the careful process of reviewing the resolution, engaging the chapter council in discussions, and conducting additional research.

*Four Months Prior*—Governors submit resolutions approved by their chapter councils with a copy to the Chair of the BOG.

*Two to Three Months Prior*—ACP staff compile background information, which is provided to Governors to inform discussions and gain feedback from their councils and chapter members, so that Governors can testify on their behalf.



## BOG Meeting

Shortly before the BOG meeting, the Reference Committee(s), which is appointed by the Chair of the BOG, meets and develops a written summary of the online testimony from BOG members, with a specific recommendation (i.e., adopt, not adopt, adopt with amendments, or refer for study) for each resolution based on testimony. The Reference Committee report is distributed to the BOG prior to the Business Meeting, at which time the BOG discusses and votes on the Reference Committee's recommendations.



## Post-BOG Meeting

The Resolutions Review Committee meets to determine where each resolution adopted or referred for study should be referred. The Chair of the BOG presents the final recommendations to the BOR at its next meeting.

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## BOR Meeting

The BOR reviews, discusses, and decides on next steps for each resolution. They can include:

- adopt or amend and adopt;
- reaffirm policy;
- rescind policy;
- adopt or amend and adopt–refer for implementation;
- refer for study and report back with recommendations; or
- not adopt.

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## Referral to Committees, Councils, or Staff

When the BOR refers a resolution to a committee or council either for study or implementation, each resolution is forwarded to the leadership and staff liaisons of the committee or council to ensure that the resolutions are given time on the next meeting agenda to address the BOR's requested action.

When the BOR refers a resolution to staff either for study or implementation, the Resolutions Administrator will forward the resolution to the appropriate staff who will then be responsible for follow-up and reporting back to the BOR.



## Resolutions Follow-up

Staff tracks follow-up to each resolution. A final report on the disposition of each resolution will be provided to the BOG and the BOR within one year after the resolution was discussed at the BOG meeting.

A complete copy of the [Resolutions Process](#) is available for your review.

# Researching a Resolution Topic

## Is an idea or issue appropriate for a resolution?

Governors work most closely and on a regular basis with ACP's lifeblood, our members. ACP members are employed in a broad array of environments and serve as a rich resource of potential resolution topics. Typically, the genesis of a resolution is an identified need within a member's day-to-day environment.

Although the range of potential resolution topics may appear wide, a successful resolution addresses issues where ACP policy setting or advocacy efforts can lead to change. Ultimately, your Governor, with assistance from the chapter council, will critically analyze resolutions proposed at the chapter level to determine their pertinence before moving those resolutions forward.

## Staying Within the Scope of the BOG Resolutions Process

Not every idea or proposal warrants a resolution. Members should focus on the purpose of the BOG Resolutions Process when proposing a resolution. The process was instituted as a means for ACP members to provide input to the BOR, ACP's national policy setting body, about issues affecting internal medicine and patient care where the College's efforts can lead to change.

### *Operational and Management Issues*

The BOG Resolutions Process was established to allow the ACP grassroots member an opportunity to provide input on policy issues where ACP's influence can lead to change. Broad issues that impact internal medicine practice and patient care are typically the scope of an effective resolution. Suggestions for improving College operational or management processes are appreciated, but are not the focus of the BOG Resolutions Process. Members with ideas to share in these realms should contact their Governor who will reach the appropriate ACP staff person responsible for the area in question.

### *Regional vs. National Legislative Items*

Although topics of local or regional interest occasionally impact the ACP membership on a broad scale, sometimes they do not. Even when they do, implementing change on a national level may not be feasible given our country's state-based legal framework. ACP may not be the most

effective or appropriate body to address a resolution that falls within this boundary. Enlisting support from a local medical society might be the most expedient approach to fulfill this resolution's intent.

#### *Chapter-Related Matters*

Issues related to chapter business or operations are also examples of inappropriate resolution topics. As important as these are, they generally do not impact College policy and do not warrant a resolution. These topics should be directed to your Governor who may address them directly, or in consultation with the Chair of the Chapters Subcommittee, a BOG class representative, or the BOG Chair, as appropriate.

### **Questions to Consider Before Drafting a Resolution**

The following questions should be considered early on when drafting a resolution:

- **Does ACP have a current position or policy on the topic or a related topic? Has a resolution been submitted in the past?**

Be sure to consult ACP's online resources to inform and direct the process of drafting a resolution (please see page 11 for "Critical ACP Resources You Must Use"). Determine what actions, if any, the College has taken in response to a proposed topic. Consulting ACP's online resources, such as the Policy Compendium, provides an opportunity to strengthen and refine the intent of a proposed resolution, which may enhance the possibility of a successful outcome and eliminate submission of a redundant topic already addressed in current policy.

- **Is ACP the most appropriate body to study or implement a resolution's intent? Are there potential collaborators?**

Sometimes it isn't most effective for ACP to lead an effort. Be sure to emphasize collaboration when drafting your resolution if it becomes apparent through research that other individuals or groups have already invested time, energy, and resources initiating an effort. Suggesting that ACP endorse other organizations' positions or join coalitions may provide pivotal support needed to breach an obstacle and move an initiative forward.



- **Does legislation or regulation on the topic already exist?**

Although the depth and breadth of existing legislation and regulation that impacts internal medicine is bewildering, attempt to evaluate the status of current legislation/regulation before proposing a resolution. As appropriate, use the additional resources cited beneath the “Critical ACP Resources You Must Use,” which should be helpful with this step.

- **What does the resolution seek to accomplish in very specific terms?**

To be effective, a resolution must be clearly written and well defined. Identify very specifically who is expected to do what, when, and how. If a resolution author fails to capture his/her intent clearly and in a well-defined way, your Governor will contact you to clarify the goal or outcome in the proposed resolution. Failing to do so will confound deliberations for your chapter council when their approval is sought before submitting a proposed resolution to national.

- **Is the resolution’s intent consistent with ACP’s mission and goals? How does it fit within ACP’s Priority Themes?**

When drafting a potential resolution, sponsors are reminded to assess the resolution’s intent and its relationship to ACP’s [four Priority Themes](#). As the BOR considers the resolutions, they may be more likely to move forward with those that are closely aligned with these current priorities. When attempting to answer this question, consider that, generally speaking, a low-impact issue or topic outside ACP’s core expertise or focus is less likely to translate into a successful resolution than the converse. Here are some questions an ACP Governor and chapter council may consider when evaluating a resolution’s fit within the College’s mission, goals, and priority themes:

- **Are most ACP chapter council members uninformed about the particular issue?**

If ACP chapter council members, physicians with broad perspectives about health care, find the subject of a resolution to be unfamiliar, then that is a

possible sign of poor alignment with the College's strategic plan and an indication that it may be an unsuitable topic.

- **Are most ACP members uninformed and likely to be indifferent?**

If members in your chapter express minimal, if any, interest at all in the topic of a proposed resolution, this might signal that the topic is irrelevant to the internal medicine community at large and something of questionable value for ACP to investigate.

- **Are ACP health policy experts inexperienced and uninformed about the issue?**

If ACP policy staff have yet to approach your resolution topic even tangentially, that may indicate the issue doesn't match ACP priorities.

A series of "yes" answers to the questions above might argue that the resolution's intent is ill fitting within the College's mission, goals, and priority themes and that a chapter council may approach a topic with caution, which might impact whether or not to sponsor a proposed idea.

## Why You Must Check ACP's Online Resources Before Proposing a Resolution

Researching a resolution topic can enhance the likelihood that an idea is relevant and will be supported. To help facilitate this task, the following resources are provided for your use.

### Critical ACP Resources You Must Use: The ERS, ACP Policy Compendium, and the ACP Policy Library

#### *Begin Your Research With the Electronic Resolutions System (ERS)*

Use the ERS when you begin researching a resolution topic. The ERS is the warehouse for BOG resolutions and contains all past resolutions. In addition to the search function, the ERS tracks resolutions at each stage in the cycle, including critical summaries and related rationale. *Final Reports* that describe a committee, council, or staff action in response to a resolution are also contained in the ERS. Typically, you will find the ERS on your [chapter website](#) beneath the "Advocacy" section. If you have difficulty locating the ERS, [seek assistance from staff at your specific chapter](#).

#### *Using the ACP Policy Compendium and ACP Policy Library*

The ACP Public Policy [Compendium](#) and the ACP Policy Library, housed on the Advocacy webpage, are ACP's repository of current and historic BOR-approved policies. You can access the Policy Compendium and Policy Library from the [ACP Online homepage under the "Advocacy" tab within the "Where We Stand" section](#). These are critical tools for use in determining where ACP stands on a particular topic you are considering.

### Additional Resources

The following College resources may be helpful as you research a particular topic. Be sure to consult these resources as appropriate:

- [Advocacy webpage](#)
- [Ethics and Professionalism Resources](#) (includes Ethics manual)

# How to Write a BOG Resolution

Authoring a resolution is an excellent way for members to get involved with the College and to begin to raise awareness about issues they feel require attention. The following information is intended to guide ACP members through the resolution writing process.

## The Basic Elements of a Resolution

The basic elements of a resolution (see [sample](#)) include:

- title;
- sponsor;
- Whereas clauses; and
- Resolved clauses.

The **Title** should succinctly state the primary issue addressed within the resolution and typically reflects the intent of the first resolved clause. Titles should begin with a gerund, a word form that is derived from a verb but that functions as a noun. Gerunds end in *-ing*, e.g., “ask” in gerund form becomes “*asking*.”

The **Sponsor** information should include the name of the primary sponsor first. Additional ACP chapters or ACP national committees and councils, as well as BOG Classes, can serve as **cosponsors**, which requires that these bodies formally approve a proposed resolution. Your Governor will facilitate the process of obtaining and submitting the names of any cosponsors.

The **Whereas** clauses provide the sponsor’s assessment of an issue and the rationale for the action requested in the Resolved clause.

- Each Whereas clause should be succinct—no more than one or two sentences.
- In the *first whereas* clause, cite pertinent, existing policy as outlined in the ACP Policy Compendium, the ERS, or other ACP policy resources.

- In the *second whereas* clause, identify the ACP goal the resolution supports from among the College's goals.
- In the *third whereas* clause, outline the rationale for the proposed recommendation;
- Whereas clauses can describe the problem that the Resolved clause is intended to address, explain how the Resolved clause will correct the problem, or otherwise defend or support the Resolved clause.
- Statements of fact cited in a Whereas clause should include an appropriate reference (unless they are common knowledge). All pertinent information should be contained in the Whereas clauses. No attachments or addendums will be accepted with resolutions. Footnotes are acceptable to cite supporting reference material and/or data. (*Note:* Try to find relevant statistics, analyses, surveys, commentaries, etc. to support your resolution. This information will bolster your Governor's testimony).

The **Resolved** clauses will become ACP policy if BOG-recommended and BOR-approved and are the most important components of the resolution. Each Resolved clause must stand on its own.

- Each Resolved clause must contain an actionable request and make sense when read apart from the Whereas clauses, since the Resolved clause represents policy that will be adopted. Resolved clauses should be clear, succinct, and withstand scrutiny.
- Identify the requested action in the *Resolved* clause as follows:
  - a) Begin all policy resolves with these words: "Resolved that ACP policy..."
  - b) Begin all directives with the phrase "Resolved that the Board of Regents..."
- Do not combine a policy resolve and a directive in the same clause:
  - a) If the intent is to change/create policy and outline desired action in the same resolution, write the policy resolve first, clearly indicating what policy change is requested.
  - b) Identify desired action in a subsequent resolve.
- Resolved clauses should be stated in the affirmative, since the negative form is often confusing. Use active rather than passive voice.
- Limit the number of Resolved clauses. Use one Resolved clause if at all possible. One tersely, well-written Resolved clause, or request for the BOR to take action/create new policy, is more effective than three or four unfocused Resolved clauses, which dilute the impact of a resolution and may confuse an audience.

# Submitting a Proposed Resolution

## Who can submit a resolution?

ACP Governors are authorized to submit resolutions approved by their chapter councils to ACP national. Once a chapter council approves a resolution, it becomes a resolution of the chapter. Keep in mind that an ACP chapter council-approved resolution is not ACP policy and should not be publicized.

## What is required with your proposed resolution submission?

ACP Governors must submit a completed resolution submission checklist along with your resolution. You can consult this [checklist](#) as you research and draft your resolution, which can speed up the process of review and submission for your Governor. Be sure to forward a completed checklist along with each resolution to your [ACP Chapter](#). The BOG agreed that submission of a completed checklist is essential to make the ACP BOG Resolutions Process more efficient. Your completed checklist must address the following:

- a. Identify how the resolution links to ACP's missions and goals, as well as ACP's Priority Themes; and if it does not link, indicate why the resolution should be heard.
- b. Identify research you have done in developing the resolution.

## When must proposed resolutions be submitted?

Proposed resolutions must be submitted at the chapter level by the deadline announced in the *I.M. Matters Weekly from ACP* and published on ACP Online in advance of each BOG meeting. In general, the resolution deadline at the chapter level is approximately six months before the first day of the BOG meeting.



### Questions and Help

If you have questions about the submission process, need further instructions in order to complete a checklist, or encounter difficulty using the ERS, please contact staff at your local [ACP Chapter](#) who can arrange for assistance.