"Being an effective CMA General Council delegate or member observer"

Information Guide

The following has been designed with the advice of the Speaker and Deputy Speaker of General Council to provide delegates with key information and suggestions that will help make the most of their role and participation in the General Council debate process when attending the CMA Annual Meeting.

A REVIEW OF CMA GOVERNANCE STRUCTURE

How does the CMA Governance Structure Work?

The CMA’s formal governance structure is found in its incorporating statute and bylaws along with general legislation and law relating to corporations. The CMA is a not-for-profit corporation incorporated in 1909 by a special Act of Parliament.

There are a number of components to the CMA’s governance structure:
- Members
- General Council
- Board of Directors

In addition to these major governance components, committees, provincial/territorial medical associations, affiliates and associates all play significant advisory roles.

Members

Changes made to the CMA bylaws at the 1997 General Council have provided two primary avenues for greater accountability to the membership. The first is providing an opportunity for members to ask questions of the Board of Directors at the Annual Meeting of members. The second is an explicit requirement that CMA members select delegates to General Council. Elected and appointed positions are advertised and attention is paid to representation at all levels. In addition, ongoing membership market research and a staff dedicated to membership service provide mechanisms to determine members’ needs and to meet them.

A Members’ Forum has been introduced at General Council to improve member communication and transparency and to encourage member engagement. This session has quickly become a highly valued opportunity for members to discuss issues and share feedback on key areas of interest with elected officers, directors and senior staff from the CMA and MD Physician Services.

The CMA is continuing to work toward being more open and responsive to the membership and has introduced additional opportunities for CMA members to connect with General Council through social media channels. During General Council, social media technologies such as twitter, online chat rooms and member polling are used in various sessions.
General Council

What does Council do?

General Council is the governing body and legislative authority of the Association responsible for providing high-level policy guidance and direction to the organization in general and the Board of Directors in particular. Its function is to provide broad policy direction to the Association via the debate, discussion and passage of motions at General Council. Under the Bylaws Council has the following additional functions:

- review the reports of the Board of Directors and the reports of all standing committees;
- discuss any matter relating to the general health and welfare of the public, the profession or the Association;
- elect the officers, the Speaker and the Deputy Speaker, the directors, the chairs of the Committee on Ethics and the Audit Committee, and members of the committees on Ethics, as well as some representation on the Governance Committee and Appointment Review Committee, as well as Audit and Nominations; and
- the approval of membership fees and the appointment of an auditor.

Subject to Chapter 19 of the CMA Act of Incorporation and Bylaws, General Council may make bylaws and amend them from time to time.

Who is a member of Council?

Delegates to General Council include:

- the Chair of the Board and the Board of Directors;
- the Speaker and Deputy Speaker;
- the President of each provincial/territorial medical association;
- delegates from the provincial/territorial medical associations;
- the chairs of standing committees and core committees and fora;
- a delegate from the Canadian Forces Medical Services;
- the affiliate society delegates;
- the past Presidents, the past Speakers, the past Chairs of the Board of Directors and the past Secretaries General for 5 years after their term in office.

Observers to General Council may include:

- any member of the Association;
- associate society representatives;
- past officers of the CMA who have passed the 5-year mark of their term in office;
- nonmedical personnel of the provincial/territorial medical associations and of the Association;
- any other individual invited by the Secretary General, the President or the Chair of the Board of Directors.

Observers may attend open meetings of General Council. Observers may address General Council only with the permission of General Council and with the permission of the Speaker. Observers do not have a vote at Council.

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1 past officers of the Association who have passed the 5-year mark of their term may address GC in same manner as delegates.
**Board of Directors**

**What does the Board do?**

The Board of Directors has the executive authority of the Association and is responsible for the management of the affairs of the Association in accordance with the policies established by General Council. The Board of Directors reports its stewardship for the year to the next meeting of General Council.

Between meetings of General Council, Council delegates through the Board of Directors have all the rights and powers of General Council not specifically reserved for General Council (e.g., bylaw changes), and may delegate these as they see fit.

**Who is on the Board?**

The Board of Directors comprises:

- The President, President-Elect, Immediate Past President, Chair of the Board of Directors and Honorary Treasurer;
- directors nominated by provincial/territorial medical associations
- a student director;
- a resident director.

The Board is responsible for appointing the Chair, who may but need not be an elected director, and the Honorary Treasurer from within the Board.

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**GENERAL COUNCIL DELEGATES – HOW TO BE AN EFFECTIVE DELEGATE**

**How to should I prepare for my role as a delegate or observer?**

If you really want to do your job as a Council delegate or observer, you should:

- view the GC Orientation web site located on the annual meeting website at cma.ca
- attend the GC orientation session on the Sunday prior to GC (4:15 pm – 5 pm)
- review the *Reports to General Council* provided in advance of the meeting and the actions taken since last General Council;
- discuss positions taken by the CMA with colleagues, identify issues of importance and bring forward any new subject for discussion/consideration by General Council; although observers may not speak to motions without the approval of General Council through the Speaker nor may they vote on motions, observers are encouraged to discuss any points of interest with delegates in order to share and highlight their experiences/insights and perspectives related to motions that are tabled to be debated.

**What else is expected in fulfilling the role of a delegate ?**

At General Council, delegates are encouraged to participate actively in the democratic process by:

- draft and submit motions to the Resolutions Committee for consideration by General Council, ensuring that motions are relevant to the strategic direction of the CMA and that they have been prepared following the procedures set out by the Resolutions Committee (refer to ‘Call for Motions’ material provided with the *Reports to General Council*);
• “lobby” for your motion(s) prior to the meeting by discussing your motion(s) with other delegates who may have similar ideas.
• debating motions that are relevant to the strategic direction of the CMA;
• respecting the rules of order – in other words, debate actively, but play fair! (refer to the Procedures section of the Reports to General Council) ; and
• remembering that while you come from a specific constituency, you are voting for what is best for the CMA as a whole.

As a delegate what do I do if I would like to speak to an issue?

If you want to say something during a debate you should:
• proceed to a microphone and, after being recognized by the Speaker, identify yourself by name and representation, and state whether you are speaking for or against the motion;
• limit yourself to speaking only once to a motion unless permission is granted to speak further; and
• not repeat yourself when speaking to motions.

Please be polite when speaking for or against motions – debate the ideas, not personalities.

It is important to note that the mover of a motion has the right to be the first delegate to speak and that the mover closes debate when speaking for a second time.

May I distribute materials in General Council chambers?

Documents and other materials may only be distributed in General Council chambers with the approval of the Speaker. Requests for approval must be coordinated through the CMA’s on-site resolutions office.

What if I’m approached by the media?

Delegates are reminded that media are routinely in attendance at General Council and they may be approached by media for comments following debate on specific issues. The CMA communications staff is available to assist delegates who may be approached by media. Delegates may respond to these requests or invite the media to speak to one of the CMA’s official spokespeople who may be contacted through the CMA’s on-site media office. If there is an issue that delegates believe should be discussed privately, a motion to move in-camera should be brought to the floor of General Council. Media would be asked to leave the room before discussion proceeds.

It is important to note that the Canadian Medical Association Reports to General Council is a confidential document and should not be discussed with media until approved by General Council.

Delegates are reminded that the distribution of media releases/materials in General Council chambers is prohibited, and the distribution of non-General Council related materials to media may detract from the CMA’s communications efforts and strategies.

During General Council, a delegate may request on a ‘point of procedure’ that a particular discussion or session be held in-camera. The delegate must specify which level of in-camera (listed below) is requested. A vote will be taken and a majority will be required. The three levels of in-camera are:
Level 1 – Exclusion of media
Level 2 – Exclusion of media and non-member observers
Level 3 – Delegates only
Should General Council approve to deliberate in-camera, the speaker will seek additional clarification as to
the appropriateness of staff and/or technical crew remaining in the room to facilitate business

Where should I sit in chambers?
Physical layout and seating of GC chambers aligns with current conference trends and best practices to support
knowledge sharing and greater networking. As result, GC has an open seating format. There is no assigned
seating within the provincial/territorial delegate caucus areas and delegates may choose to sit wherever they wish
within the delegate area of GC chambers.

Observers also do not have an assigned area within GC chambers and are not restricted to assigned seating
within chambers.

**SPEAKER AND DEPUTY SPEAKER OF GENERAL COUNCIL**

What is the role of the Speaker and Deputy Speaker?
The Speaker:
- sets the agenda, in consultation with the Chair of the Board;
- strikes a Resolutions Committee;
- chairs the meeting and preserves order;
- makes rulings on what is and is not proper; and
- keeps the meeting moving.

The Deputy Speaker fills in for the Speaker at various times in the course of the meeting.

After the annual meeting, a planning group consisting of the Speaker, Deputy Speaker and senior staff meets to
review the results of the evaluations from General Council and related events, and of the various debrief
meetings with the Board, Executive Committee, Resolutions Committee and staff, and to discuss ways to
improve General Council and related events in the future.

**RESOLUTIONS COMMITTEE**

What does the Resolutions Committee do?
The Resolutions Committee comprises the Speaker, the Deputy Speaker and four members appointed by the
Speaker. The committee meets prior to General Council to review motions submitted by delegates before
consideration by General Council in order to ensure that the motions are properly worded, clear and
understandable, do not duplicate existing CMA policy, and are not duplicates of other motions. The
fundamental purpose of the committee is to assist members of Council.

Council has asked the Resolutions Committee to review all the motions and in order to facilitate the flow
of discussion within General Council, the Resolutions may as required, establish a themed grouping under
the Delegate Motion session. Delegates’ Motions within a themed area will be discussed in order of time
Council has also asked that the committee do its best to help movers and seconders make their motions the best they can be, and to work with movers and seconders to improve their motions.

Should duplicate or similar motions be received, the Resolutions Committee will:

- either collapse the motions into one clearly stated motion or select the motion whose intent and direction is most clearly stated;
- where possible and appropriate, assign a mover and a seconder and include background material from each of the originally submitted motions on the Motion Form (refer to the ‘Call for Motions’ package provided with the Reports to General Council) of the selected motion; and
- contact the mover and/or seconder (or contact designate) of the originally submitted motions to inform them of the changes proposed.

The Resolutions Committee will also identify motions to be placed on the consent agenda according to the following criteria: Motions placed on the consent agenda include motions that:

- are not likely to initiate debate or dissent among delegates or the profession;
- are in keeping with the CMA’s strategic direction and its strategic plan; and
- require little to no resources to implement

Motions will be debated at General Council in accordance to the motion’s ranked order within their session of themed area (if established) The ranking or order of debate determined by the date and time of receipt of motion by the Association.

A consent agenda will be presented to General Council, for adoption, at the beginning of each strategic session or delegates’ motion session. At that time, delegates may request that a motion be removed from the consent agenda. The motion in question will be added within its ranked order to the appropriate strategic session or delegate motion group for delegates’ consideration.

During General Council, Resolutions Committee members are available to assist delegates if they have questions preparing a motion and to provide advice to the Speaker.

**How can I speak to a motion on the consent agenda?**

Movers of motions that have been identified for the consent agenda will be invited to speak to the issue profiled in their motion via a short video. These commentaries will be made available electronically to delegates, observers and CMA members at large following the approval of the consent agenda motions on cma.ca. Movers of motions that have been identified for the consent agenda will be notified via email on the Saturday prior to the start of GC and an onsite recording time for either Saturday or Sunday will be arranged.

**Rules of order at the meeting**

**Who may address General Council?**
Registered delegates, identified by a red badge and red ribbon, and associate member observers wearing a red ribbon, may address General Council. All other member and non-member observers, must obtain permission of General Council through the Speaker before addressing General Council.

Badges must be worn to be admitted to and to address General Council.

**How do motions and amendments work?**

Motions are divided into six categories: main, amending, procedural, demands, closing and elections and appointments. Please refer to page 3 in the *Canadian Medical Association Reports to General Council* for a description of the characteristics of the different categories of motions.

Motions and amendments must be:
- relevant to the subject discussed;
- within the power and scope of the meeting and the constitution;
- stated in the affirmative and not argumentative or offensive; and
- free from unnecessary or objectionable words.

An amendment takes precedence over a main motion and a motion to postpone indefinitely. Although an amendment does not allow a speaker to be interrupted it does allow the discussion to be interrupted. Amendments require a seconder and are debatable as to the amendment only. Sub-amendments require the same majority as the main motion to which it is attached.

Discussion can take place on a debatable motion or an amendment. This discussion is carried on under the supervision of the Speaker in accordance with the rules of order and must be relevant to the subject (or the amendment), non-personal, and always directed to the Speaker. If a delegate fails to adhere to the subject under discussion when speaking, he/she may be ruled out of order.

A motion that is adopted by General Council becomes a resolution.

**How do motions get passed?**

Voting takes place for each motion or amendment to a motion and these are generally done through electronic voting unless manual voting is requested by the Speaker of General Council for a specific vote.

**Voting – majorities** - Ordinary motions and amendments to ordinary motions require 50% plus one majority. Special motions, bylaws and procedural motions require two-thirds majority. Restrictive motions, referral motions and objecting to consideration motions require two-thirds majority.

**Voting – procedures** - Delegate voting can be carried out in one of three ways: electronic voting, voting with voter cards or a standing count. Since 2001, General Council has passed a motion that stipulates manual voting will be used in place of electronic voting at the discretion of the chair or at the request of General Council on a specific vote.

**What is a Committee of the Whole session?**
A committee of the whole is not strictly a committee, but it acts with all the informality of a committee. A committee of the whole session suspends the rules of order and allows for full and open discussion of an issue without the presence of motions. It is a format that brings the entire membership body into the discussion and decision-making process by spending less time on formalities and more time on discussion specific items related to an issue.

**AFTER THE MEETING**

When the meeting is over, delegates are expected to report back to their constituents on the proceedings of General Council.

**What happens to the resolutions following GC?**

Motions adopted by General Council and motions considered by General Council and referred to the Board of Directors are reviewed by CMA senior staff and a disposition is recommended for each. This information is provided to the Board of Directors for consideration at its fall meeting, recognizing that dispositions requiring significant human or financial resources are further considered as strategic priorities are developed.

Motions not considered by General Council will not be referred to the Board – motions that are not tabled and do not reach the floor of General Council are not the property of General Council and therefore are deemed to have not existed or to have “died on the order paper.”

Once the Board has approved and provided direction regarding the disposition of General Council resolutions and motions referred to the Board, the CMA will:

- consider the disposition of General Council resolutions and human resource and financial implications when determining the strategic priorities and setting the budget for the following year; and
- build the dispositions into current and future core work plans and develop business plans for special projects.

Following this, disposition and action taken on resolutions/motions is circulated via email to delegates in order to ensure delegates are kept apprised of the CMA’s planned work.

Also, as directed by the Board of Directors, movers and seconders will be provided with the opportunity for further comment on the status of their motion. Additionally, the account of actions taken in response to the resolutions and any related outcomes is again reported to delegates in the Reports to General Council which is forwarded to delegates in June of each year.