

Resolution 216 — Establishing a Standing Committee on Oversight of ADA Communications and Public Trust

Author: Dr. Steven Saxe, Delegate

IF YOU VOTE YES

A YES vote supports the action requested in the resolving clauses. This resolution creates a permanent Standing Committee of the House of Delegates to oversee all ADA-controlled, non-scientific communications and ensure alignment with adopted policy and member values. It charges the committee with monitoring ADA publications, advertising, and social media for misinformation or brand misuse, and coordinating corrective action with the Board of Trustees. The resolution explicitly excludes scientific and peer-reviewed content and focuses only on communications, branding, and public trust.

IF YOU VOTE NO

A NO vote supports the Board's position that existing committees can manage communications oversight without new structure. It preserves a system where vendor advertising, promotional content, and non-scientific editorials can appear under the ADA name without consistent review. This approach risks continued reputational damage, member distrust, and public confusion about ADA endorsement standards.

SUMMARY

This resolution safeguards the ADA's credibility and restores member trust by creating a formal governance mechanism to oversee ADA-branded communications. The proposed Standing Committee on Oversight of ADA Communications and Public Trust would monitor advertising, editorial content, and public messaging for consistency with ADA policy and ethics. It ensures transparency, rapid response to misinformation, and alignment between ADA leadership, members, and the public.

Why the Board Is Wrong

The Board voted NO, citing concerns about cost and "censorship," but those arguments miss the point. This resolution does not censor scientific work—it ensures accountability in public communications. The Board's alternative, Resolution 218, merely "encourages alignment" and lacks the authority or structure needed for true oversight. Without a standing committee, the ADA risks further erosion of trust from members who expect ethical consistency and brand protection. A \$150,000 annual investment is minimal compared to the cost of reputational damage.

TALKING POINTS

- The ADA's credibility is its most valuable asset.
- Member trust declines when ADA media promotes unvetted CE or vendor content.
- Oversight ensures ADA communications align with adopted policy, not personal opinion.
- The resolution excludes peer-reviewed science and protects editorial independence.
- The House—not staff—should safeguard the ADA brand and public trust.
- A small, defined annual cost yields long-term transparency and stability.
- Saying YES supports accountability, consistency, and professionalism.
- Saying NO leaves reputation and policy alignment to chance.



Prepared by Dentistry in General Advocacy Coalition
<https://dentistryingeneral.com/digac>

Resolution No. 216 NewReport: N/A Date Submitted: 07/18/2025Submitted By: Dr. Steven Saxe, delegate, NevadaReference Committee: A (Business, Membership and Administrative Matters)Total Net Financial Implication: \$150,000 Net Dues Impact: \$2Amount One-time: Amount On-going: \$150,000

ADA Strategic Forecast Outcome: Tripartite: Promote Tripartite stability, success, and future growth.

ESTABLISHING A STANDING COMMITTEE ON OVERSIGHT OF ADA COMMUNICATIONS AND PUBLIC TRUST

The following resolution was submitted on Friday, July 18, 2025, by Dr. Steven Saxe, delegate, Nevada.

Background: Across industries, successful nonprofit and for-profit organizations dedicate entire divisions to safeguard brand integrity, uphold public trust, and respond to negative publicity swiftly. For the American Dental Association (ADA), the stakes are even higher: as a professional organization in healthcare, reputational harm can directly erode member trust, compromise public confidence, and diminish the influence of organized dentistry.

In recent years, members have raised serious concerns about how the ADA's name and platforms have been used to promote or affiliate with non-CERP-recognized continuing education (CE) providers. ADA members rely on CERP approval to ensure the continuing education courses they take are accurate, evidence-based, and meet professional standards. This helps dentists maintain their licenses and stay current without worrying about misinformation or low-quality content. It is inappropriate for any of our media outlets or publications to advertise or promote any continuing education that has not gone through the rigorous vetting processes. Members also count on CERP to make sure courses don't blur the lines between general education and the specialized training required in ADA-recognized specialties like oral surgery, dental anesthesiology, or GPR programs. Without that clarity, both patients and doctors can be misled, and the value of ADA-recognized specialty training may be undermined (*2024 Current Policies*, pages 127–128, "Guidelines for Teaching Pain Control and Sedation to Dentists and Dental Students").

Across industries, successful nonprofit and for-profit organizations dedicate entire divisions to safeguard brand integrity, uphold public trust, and respond to negative publicity swiftly. For the American Dental Association (ADA), the stakes are even higher: as a professional organization in healthcare, reputational harm can directly erode member trust, compromise public confidence, and diminish the influence of organized dentistry.

In recent years, members have raised concerns about how the ADA's name and platforms have been used to promote or affiliate with continuing education (CE) that is not recognized through the ADA Continuing Education Recognition Program (CERP). ADA members rely on CERP approval to ensure CE courses are accurate, evidence-based, and meet professional standards. This protects dentists from misinformation or low-quality content and provides confidence that CE offerings do not blur the line between general education and training in ADA-recognized specialties such as oral surgery, dental anesthesiology, or GPR programs.

The ADA's own CERP Recognition Standards make this point clear: "Commercial interests are not eligible for recognition" (CERP Recognition Standards, numbered page 3, Section 4). Commercial

1 interests include any entity that produces, markets, resells, or distributes health care goods or services
2 used by patients. This means vendor-sponsored training programs on their own products cannot be
3 CERP-recognized, and should not appear to carry ADA endorsement without the appropriate vetting.
4 Failure to apply these safeguards risks misleading both patients and dentists, while also undermining the
5 value of ADA-recognized specialty training.

6 Member complaints about vendor affiliations have contributed to distrust, with concerns raised over ADA-
7 endorsed partnerships. The 2024 Annual Report (p. 30) highlights ADA's endorsement and partnership
8 programs, noting that reputational risks must be carefully managed. The House has also debated vendor-
9 related reputational issues in prior reference committee discussions, underscoring that such matters rise
10 to the level of governance and warrant oversight.

11 The ADA CERP Annual Report notes that as of June 2024, there were 482 ADA CERP-recognized
12 providers, including 34 outside the U.S. and Canada, and 40 approved through Joint Accreditation for
13 Interprofessional Continuing Education. In 2022 alone, these providers offered over 42,700 unique CE
14 activities (2024 Annual Reports, page 3). However, that same report acknowledges delays in ADA's
15 planned migration to a new CERP platform, citing lack of staff capacity and the absence of an
16 implementation timeline.

17 Meanwhile, ADA-controlled media such as *Morning Huddle* and ADA News have featured content and
18 advertisements from CE providers without a transparent vetting process. This raises concern among
19 members that short-format vendor courses in areas such as sedation or surgical procedures could be
20 perceived as endorsed by ADA, even when they do not reflect ADA policy standards. For example, ADA
21 policy on sedation education requires 60 didactic hours and supervised clinical experience with at least
22 20 patients for moderate sedation training (2024 Current Policies, p. 127). When promotional content
23 does not clearly align with these standards, it risks undermining ADA credibility and confusing both
24 members and the public.

25 Dentist-facing editorials and internal content published under the ADA name have also become
26 flashpoints for concern. Members have pointed to content promoting controversial business models (e.g.,
27 corporate ownership, value-based care, or alternative licensure structures) that did not reflect balanced
28 perspectives or clearly reference adopted ADA policy. Recent concerns also arose following a guest
29 editorial in JADA, authored by a senior ADA staff member, which was published without a review
30 mechanism to evaluate alignment with House policy or member perspectives. While peer-reviewed
31 scientific content must remain independent, non-research opinion pieces—including those by ADA-
32 affiliated authors—can carry significant reputational impact and should be subject to oversight when
33 published under the ADA brand.

34 Further, with the explosion of short-form misinformation across social media and online channels, the
35 ADA must be equipped to respond quickly, credibly, and strategically. Health organizations and Fortune
36 500 companies now operate dedicated divisions to monitor and address reputational threats. These are
37 not luxuries. They are essential infrastructure.

38 Creating a committee capable of reviewing content, clarifying misinformation, and defending the integrity
39 of the ADA brand would allow the Association to meet this challenge directly and transparently. It also
40 opens the door to public-facing initiatives—such as a science-vs-misinformation site—that could restore
41 trust and reengage both members and nonmembers.

42 To accomplish this with speed and cost-efficiency, this resolution proposes forming a standing committee.
43 Standing committees are permanent governance bodies, defined in the Bylaws, and may be assigned
44 formal policy roles and oversight responsibilities. This structure provides continuity, authority, and
45 alignment with ADA governance protocols.

This resolution explicitly excludes peer-reviewed scientific research, clinical practice guidelines, or independently reviewed scientific articles published in ADA journals. Its scope is limited to non-scientific communications, branding, advertising, and opinion-based content.

Resolution

216. Resolved, that Article IV. GOVERNMENT, of the ADA *Constitution* be amended as follows (additions underscored):

Section 10. LEGISLATIVE BODY. The legislative and governing body of this Association shall be a House of Delegates. In its role as the governing body of this Association, the House of Delegates shall be responsible for (i) reviewing non-scientific content of all Association print and electronic publications and social media sites; (ii) detecting and correcting instances of misinformation concerning dentistry, the dental profession and the Association; and (iii) policing the use and misuse of the ADA brand so that the integrity of the ADA brand is assured.

Section 20. ADMINISTRATIVE BODY. The administrative body of this Association shall be a Board of Trustees.

and be it further

Resolved, that Chapter III. HOUSE OF DELEGATES, Section 50. DUTIES, of the ADA *Bylaws* be amended as follows (additions underscored):

Section 50. DUTIES: It shall be the duty of the House of Delegates to:

J. Monitor and guide the activities of the Council on Communications.

and be it further

Resolved, that Chapter III, HOUSE OF DELEGATES, Section 110. COMMITTEES, of the ADA *Bylaws* be amended as follows (additions underscored, deletions ~~stricken through~~):

Section 110. COMMITTEES. The standing committees of the House of Delegates shall be the Committee on Constitution and Bylaws, the Committee on Credentials, Rules and Order, the Strategic Forecasting Committee, and the Standing Committee on Oversight of ADA Communications and Public Trust, and such Reference Committees as shall in the determination of the Speaker of the House of Delegates be necessary to complete the business of the House of Delegates

and be it further

Resolved, that Chapter V. BOARD OF TRUSTEES, Section 70. POWERS, of the ADA *Bylaws* be amended as follows (additions underscored, deletions ~~stricken through~~):

Section 70. POWERS. The Board of Trustees shall be the managing body of the Association, vested with the power to:

L. Monitor and guide the activities of all ~~councils and~~ special committees and, with the exception of the Council on Communications, all councils.

and be it further

Resolved, that Chapter V. BOARD OF TRUSTEES, Section E. Powers, of the *ADA Governance Manual* be amended as follows (additions underscored, deletions ~~stricken through~~):

E. Powers

1. The Board of Trustees shall report to the House of Delegates for approval any interim actions taken with respect to councils and special committees, consistent with the exercise of its power to supervise, monitor and guide, on an interim basis, the activities of all ~~councils and special committees and~~, with the exception of the Council on Communications, all councils, including the establishment of rules and procedures that authorize the transaction of business by ballot without a meeting.

and be it further

Resolved, that Chapter XIX. PUBLICATIONS, Section A. *The Journal of the American Association*, be amended as follows (deletions ~~stricken through~~):

A. *The Journal of the American Association*. *The Journal of the American Dental Association*, hereinafter referred to as *The Journal*, shall be published with a frequency and at a subscription rate that shall be determined by the Board of Trustees. The object of *The Journal* shall be to report, chronicle and evaluate activities of scientific and professional interest to members of the dental profession. Except as otherwise provided in ~~the powers of the Board of Trustees in the~~ *ADA Bylaws*, the editor of *The Journal* shall have the authority to determine its editorial content, including scientific-based content, and shall, with the assistance of an editorial board, establish and maintain a written editorial policy for *The Journal*.

and be it further

Resolved, that the *Manual of the House of Delegates and Supplemental Information*, page 21, be amended as follows (additional underscored, deletions stricken through):

Standing Committees of the House of Delegates

In order to conduct its business, the House of Delegates uses ~~three~~ four standing committees: (1) the Committee on Credentials, Rules and Order; (2) the Committee on Constitution and Bylaws; and (3) the Strategic Forecasting Committee; and (4) the Standing Committee on Oversight of ADA Communications and Public Trust. The Committee on Credentials, Rules and Order is composed of nine members of the House of Delegates appointed by the President. The Committee on Constitution and Bylaws is composed of not more than eight nor less than six members of the Council on Ethics, Bylaws and Judicial Affairs appointed by the President in consultation with the Speaker of the House of Delegates and the Council Chair. The Standing Committee on Oversight of ADA Communications and Public Trust is composed of seven members of the House of Delegates appointed annually by the Speaker of the House of Delegates. These committees are largely concerned with procedural matters. A description of their specific duties follows.

and be it further

Resolved, that the *Manual of the House of Delegates and Supplemental Information* be amended to add the Standing Committee on Oversight of ADA Communications and Public Trust governance structure under this new Standing Committee as follows:

Standing Committee on Oversight of ADA Communications and Public Trust
Duties and Scope of Responsibility

The Standing Committee on Oversight of ADA Communications and Public Trust shall:

1. Review ADA-controlled non-scientific materials, including but not limited to ADA News, JADA opinion content and guest editorials, Morning Huddle articles, social media posts, digital campaigns, and member-facing communications, to ensure alignment with House-adopted policy, ADA ethical standards, and member values, and recommend corrective action to the Board of Trustees when misalignment is identified.
2. Evaluate ADA-controlled materials, including CE advertising, vendor promotions, dentist-facing editorial content, and other communications that carry the ADA name or appear on ADA platforms, to ensure consistency with House-adopted policy and member values, and recommend corrective action to the Board of Trustees when necessary.
3. Monitor reputational risk arising from third-party communications, vendor affiliations, public media, or misinformation, and recommend corrective action or clarification to the Board of Trustees as needed to preserve ADA credibility and the reputation of the profession.
4. Operate in coordination with the Council on Communications and other relevant ADA agencies, with oversight responsibility limited to non-scientific content, communications, and affiliations that may impact ADA's reputation, brand consistency, or alignment with ADA policy, and shall not supersede the Council on Communications' duties under Chapter VIII, Section K2 of the ADA Governance and Organizational Manual.
5. Review CE-related promotions and advertisements appearing on ADA-controlled platforms to identify potential misrepresentation of compliance with ADA Continuing Education Recognition Program (CERP) standards or ADA policy, and refer concerns to the Commission for Continuing Education Provider Recognition (as defined in ADA *Bylaws*, Chapter IX, Section 30.C.) or the appropriate governing body.
6. Identify advertisements or communications on ADA-controlled platforms that appear to conflict with ADA policy, ethical standards, or established criteria, and recommend appropriate removal, revision, or clarification to the responsible governing body or staff authority for further action, using a process that includes notice to the originator, an opportunity to respond, and the option for appeal to the Board of Trustees.

Composition

- The Standing Committee on Oversight of ADA Communications and Public Trust shall consist of seven members of the House of Delegates, appointed annually by the President.
- Members shall have relevant expertise in communications, continuing education, editorial oversight, ethics, or reputational risk management.
- Members shall serve a term of two years and may be reappointed for a total maximum tenure of four years.

BOARD COMMENT: The Board agrees with the author of the resolution about the importance of brand integrity and reputation management. The resolution, as written, raises concerns about censorship and would incur a substantial cost. The Board acknowledges concerns raised about advertising within ADA publications and believes these concerns can be addressed by the appropriate ADA agency in re-evaluating its advertising guidelines. The Board unanimously supports Resolution 218 put forth by the Council on Communications as a more reasonable approach to gain alignment throughout ADA

- 1 communications with the Association's policies and recommendations. Per the Governance Manual,
 2 Chapter VII, Section K2, the Council on Communications has subject matter responsibilities which include
 3 advising on the management of the Association's reputation and advising ADA agencies on branding.

4 **BOARD RECOMMENDATION: Vote No**

5 **Vote: Resolution 216**

BERG	No	DOWD	No	KNAPP	No	STUEFEN	No
BOYLE	No	GRAHAM	No	MANN	No	TULAK-GORECKI	No
BROWN	No	HISEL	Absent	MARKARIAN	No	WANAMAKER	No
CAMMARATA	No	HOWARD	No	MERCER	No		
CHOPRA	No	IRANI	No	REAVIS	Absent		
DEL VALLE-SEPÚLVEDA	No	KAHL	No	ROSATO	No		