

Resolution 504 — Reinforcing Editorial Integrity and Transparency by Empowering the Council on Communications

Author: Dr. Spencer Bloom, Delegate

IF YOU VOTE YES

A YES vote supports the action requested in the resolving clauses. It ensures that all ADA-branded publications, news, emails, and social media content reflect adopted House policy and professional ethics.

This resolution gives the Council on Communications the authority to oversee all non-scientific ADA content to ensure accuracy, neutrality, and consistency with member-approved policy. It also establishes a subcommittee of volunteer member dentists to advise on editorial standards and fairness.

IF YOU VOTE NO

A NO vote supports the status quo where ADA staff and administrative bodies can publish or promote content under the ADA name without structured member oversight. It continues a system where official ADA communications may not always align with House-adopted policy or professional values.

SUMMARY

Resolution 504 amends the ADA Constitution and Bylaws and the Governance and Organizational Manual to formally vest editorial oversight for all non-scientific ADA communications in the Council on Communications.

It requires that ADA communications—digital, print, and social media—reflect official policy and provide balanced perspectives when addressing controversial or profession-impacting topics. It ensures ADA communications promote professionalism and transparency, protecting against the commoditization of dentistry.

The resolution does not limit speech or scientific discussion. It ensures official ADA channels reflect the voice of the membership, not individual opinions or administrative narratives.

Why the Board Is Wrong

The Board claims Resolution 504 would be “cost prohibitive” and slow communications. In reality, oversight and integrity strengthen the ADA’s reputation and member trust. A subcommittee model allows efficient review without burdening staff.

The Board’s argument overlooks the root issue: repeated instances of ADA publications promoting positions not approved by the House, including editorials endorsing value-based care and DSO-affiliated practice models without balanced counterpoints.

This resolution restores trust by aligning ADA communication with adopted policy. It reinforces transparency, prevents biased editorial influence, and ensures that members—not staff—determine how the ADA’s voice represents the profession.

TALKING POINTS

- ADA communications must reflect House-adopted policy, not staff opinion.
- The Council on Communications is the proper body for editorial oversight.
- Protects professional autonomy and public trust.
- Prevents unapproved promotion of controversial or corporate-affiliated models.
- Creates a member-dentist subcommittee to ensure fairness and balance.
- Encourages transparency and accountability in all ADA-branded communications.
- Strengthens ADA integrity and restores confidence among members.



Prepared by Dentistry in General Advocacy Coalition

<https://dentistryingeneral.com/digac>

Resolution No. 504 New

Report: N/A Date Submitted: April 4, 2025

Submitted By: Dr. Spencer Bloom, delegate, Illinois

Reference Committee: D (Legislative, Governance and Related Matters)

Total Net Financial Implication: \$225,000 Net Dues Impact: \$3

Amount One-time: Amount On-going: \$150,000

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

1 REINFORCING EDITORIAL INTEGRITY AND TRANSPARENCY BY EMPOWERING THE COUNCIL 2 ON COMMUNICATIONS

3 The following resolution was submitted on Friday, April 4, 2025, by Dr. Spencer Bloom, delegate, Illinois.

4 **Background:** This resolution requires an amendment to the *ADA Constitution and Bylaws* to ensure that
5 editorial governance is vested in the Council on Communications, as the official member-led body
6 charged with ensuring that ADA public-facing communications reflect adopted policy, professional ethics,
7 and transparency standards.

8 This resolution does not restrict individual speech or scientific discourse. It ensures that official ADA
9 communications—including journals, news publications, emails, and social media—reflect the adopted
10 policies and values of the membership. Staff, including dentists employed in staff roles, retain the right to
11 express themselves personally. However, if their statements on personal social media or public platforms
12 may reasonably be perceived as representing the ADA—especially when professional titles or affiliations
13 are used—those statements must meet the same standard of professionalism, neutrality, and policy
14 alignment expected of official communications. This is a matter of transparency, accountability, and
15 professional ethics—not censorship, consistent with the *ADA Code of Professional Conduct*, which states
16 that “professionals have a duty to make known their policies and practices to the public in a manner that
17 is truthful, responsible and consistent with the values of the profession”. (*ADA Principles of Ethics and*
18 *Code of Professional Conduct*, 2025, Section 5.F.7, p. 16)

19 In recent years, members have raised growing concerns that ADA communication channels are not
20 operating in alignment with adopted policy or representative member values. Instead, editorial space in
21 flagship publications has been used to promote controversial positions without counterpoint or approval
22 by member-led councils. For example, [a 2023 JADA editorial authored by senior ADA staff—including the](#)
23 [ADA's Chief Economist—promoted value-based care as an emerging and desirable trend in dentistry.](#)
24 While a rebuttal was later published, no opportunity was provided for a counterpoint to appear at the
25 same time, despite widespread member concern that such models increase commodification of care,
26 reduce the doctor-patient relationship to a transactional business model, and accelerate the
27 commoditization of dentistry, where clinical services become indistinguishable and primarily priced for
28 volume. This signals a breakdown in oversight.

29 Member concerns have also been raised regarding content that promotes or appears to normalize
30 models of dental care that prioritize business metrics over clinical judgment—such as value-based
31 contracting, volume-driven incentives, or third-party ownership models. These trends contribute to the
32 commodification and commoditization of dentistry, where professional care is reduced to a transactional
33 service and patient relationships are devalued. Similar effects have been documented in other areas of
34 health care: private-equity ownership of U.S. hospitals has been linked to worsened patient-reported care
35 experience, with a 2.1–5.2 percentage-point decline in “would you recommend” scores over three years

1 post-acquisition, and an increase in hospital-acquired complications including infections and falls (See:
2 Singh Y, Papanicolas I, Saini V, Jena AB. “Changes in Hospital Adverse Events and Patient Outcomes
3 Associated With Private Equity Acquisition.” *JAMA*, 2024;331(6):508–517. doi:10.1001/jama.2024.0461.
4 Available at: <https://pubmed.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/38147093/>).

5 Value-based care models have also faced criticism for misaligning financial incentives with clinical
6 autonomy, complicating quality measurement, and imposing administrative burdens—challenges that, if
7 echoed in dentistry, risk reshaping patient care into a consumer transactional model (See: Moses H,
8 Matheson DHM. “Value-Based Payment Models for Networks of Care.” *Health Affairs Blog*, 2023.
9 Available at: <https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pmc/articles/PMC10119264/>).

10 While the ADA has not formally defined “commodification” or “commoditization” in policy, members have
11 expressed concern that these trends erode public trust, compromise autonomy, and undercut the
12 profession’s ethical foundation (*ADA Principles of Ethics and Code of Professional Conduct*,
13 Section 3.B.). For this reason, ADA-branded communications should avoid content that could reasonably
14 be perceived as endorsing such frameworks unless explicitly supported by House-adopted policy.

15 Further concerns have been raised over ADA News and ADA social media accounts publishing content
16 that appears to highlight corporate-affiliated models—such as DSOs—without offering counterpoint or
17 oversight by the Council on Communications [More Dentists Affiliating with DSOs – ADA News, June 2023](#). For instance, an August 2023 ADA News article [showcased a periodontist’s decision to sell their practice and transition into a DSO-affiliated model](#), presented positively and without alternative
19 viewpoints. These actions undermine the perception of neutrality and pose reputational risks. They also
20 conflict with professional obligations outlined in the *ADA Code of Professional Conduct*, which states that
21 “every profession owes society the responsibility to regulate itself,” and requires dentists to observe the
22 rules of their professional societies [ADA Code of Professional Conduct \(2025\), Section 3.B — Governance of a Profession, p. 8](#). Additionally, the ADA Constitution and Bylaws establish the House of
23 Delegates as the Association’s legislative and governing body, the supreme authority for setting official
24 policy positions. This underscores the importance of ensuring that ADA-branded communications remain
25 aligned with policies adopted by the membership.

26 The following documents make clear who holds the authority to set official ADA policy, and what
27 expectations apply to any platform carrying the ADA name.

28 The *Manual of the House of Delegates and Supplemental Information* reinforces the exclusive authority of
29 the House by stating that “the powers and duties of the House of Delegates, as defined in Chapter III,
30 Sections 40 and 50, of the *Bylaws*, make it the supreme authoritative body of the Association” (page 8).
31 This authority includes the power to enact legislation, determine policies, and establish the mission and
32 vision of the American Dental Association.

33 In addition, the ADA policy *Standards for Dental Society Publications* (*Trans.* 1997:303, 660; 2010:602;
34 2023:XXX) establishes that society publications should inform members on issues of concern,
35 communicate policies and actions, report professional developments, and maintain balanced content.
36 While directed primarily at society-published materials, these standards underscore that all ADA-branded
37 communications should uphold accuracy, fairness, and alignment with policies adopted by the
38 membership.

39 It is important to recognize that ADA communications reach not only current members, but also
40 prospective members, the broader dental community, and the general public. The ADA’s Strategic Plan
41 2020–2025 identifies expanding membership—particularly among underrepresented demographics—as a
42 core organizational objective. Because communications are central to this effort, content directed at non-
43 members through ADA.org, social media, and public campaigns should be held to the same standards of
44 professionalism, accuracy, and alignment with adopted policy as internal member communications.

Likewise, editorial content that is primarily dentist-facing—including commentary in ADA News and JADA—should be reviewed by member dentists to ensure that it reflects the values and voice of the profession. To support this standard while avoiding operational overload on the Council on Communications, a standing subcommittee composed of volunteer member dentists should be established. This subcommittee would serve in an advisory role, assisting with the review of non-scientific public-facing and dentist-facing content and providing feedback to the Council on Communications. This model aligns with ADA precedent, where volunteer panels and task forces have historically provided input on continuing education, public campaigns, and other communication initiatives.

While scientific content in JADA is managed by the Editor, other content—such as editorials, commentaries, and news—currently lacks structured member oversight. ADA News, digital content, email campaigns, and social media are produced by staff. This resolution strives to find a balance between professional communication standards and member-driven oversight. It is consistent with the ADA's core values of integrity, evidence-based action, and commitment to members as outlined in the ADA Strategic Plan.

To protect the ADA's reputation, rebuild trust among members, and ensure that all communications reflect the values and directives of the membership, oversight must be formalized. This resolution seeks to ensure that content disseminated under the ADA name is consistent with adopted policy, accurately reflects the Association's positions, and avoids messaging that could contribute to the commoditization of the profession.

Resolution

504. 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 publication decisions over and editorial oversight for all non-scientific content appearing in any Association publication or communications channel.

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. Oversee all non-scientific content, including content relating to ADA policies, advocacy efforts or legislative agendas, published in ADA journals, periodicals and other communications channels, including online sites maintained by the Association.

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~~):

E. Cause *The Journal of the American Dental Association* to be published as the official publication of the Association, including appointment of an editor and an editorial board nominated by the editor.

F. Cause to be published such other publications as may be deemed advisable.

~~G. Cause to be published in or omitted from any official publication of the Association any article relating to ADA policies, advocacy efforts or legislative agendas.~~

and be it further

Resolved, that Chapter XIX. PUBLICATIONS, Section A., of the *ADA Governance and Organizational Manual*, be amended as follows (additions underlined, deletions ~~stricken through~~):

A. *The Journal of the American Dental 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. The Editor of *The Journal* shall retain full responsibility for peer-reviewed scientific content. Oversight of all non-scientific editorial content—including editorials, commentaries, and other opinion-based material—shall fall under the authority of the ADA Council on Communications. The Council may carry out this responsibility directly or through a designated subcommittee of member dentists, consistent with policies adopted by the House of Delegates. 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 Chapter XIX. PUBLICATIONS, Section B., of the *ADA Governance and Organizational Manual* be amended as follows (additions underlined, deletions ~~stricken through~~):

B. Other Journals. ~~The Association may publish or cause to be published other journals in the field of dentistry subject to the direction and regulations of the Board of Trustees. The Association may publish such other journals or periodicals as may be authorized by the Board of Trustees. Editorial oversight of all non-scientific content in such publications shall be provided by the Council on Communications or its designated subcommittee, to ensure consistency with adopted ADA policy and editorial standards.~~

and be it further

Resolved, that Chapter VIII. COUNCILS, Section K.2., of the *ADA Governance and Organizational Manual* be amended as follows (additions underlined, deletions ~~stricken through~~):

K. Areas of Responsibility.

* * *

2. Council on Communications. The areas of subject matter responsibility of the Council shall be:

- a. Advise on the management of the Association's reputation;
- b. Develop, recommend and maintain ADA strategic communications plans;
- c. Advise ADA agencies on branding;
- d. Advise on prioritization and allocation of communications resources; and
- e. Advise on communications and marketing for constituents and components, upon request;
- f. Serve as the editorial oversight authority for all ADA public-facing and member-facing non-scientific content, including but not limited to JADA, ADA News, ADA.org, email newsletters, social media, and other communications platforms. The Council shall ensure such content reflects House-adopted policy and adheres to established standards of editorial integrity. The Council shall also ensure that ADA communication platforms allow for the timely publication of dissenting or alternate viewpoints in response to editorial or opinion-based content and may establish standards for how such counterpoints are solicited, selected, and displayed. The Council may delegate review responsibilities to a standing subcommittee composed of member dentists, appointed to advise on editorial consistency and fairness; and
- g. Include, in its annual report to the House of Delegates reporting on the following:
 - i. An overview of ADA communications channels, including both public-facing and member-facing platforms;
 - ii. A summary of current editorial standards and any updates adopted by the Council;
 - iii. Aggregated member feedback on communications content or messaging;
 - iv. A summary of compliance with House-adopted editorial policy across platforms; and
 - v. Any instances of unreviewed non-scientific content found to conflict with ADA policy and any corrective recommendations made by the Council.

and be it further

Resolved, that ADA staff—including dentists employed in staff roles—shall not use official ADA communication platforms, including publications, email communications, websites, or social media accounts, to publish or promote content that conflicts with policy adopted by the House of Delegates or may reasonably be perceived as undermining the independence of the dental profession or reducing it to a transactional model of care, and be it further

Resolved, that when non-scientific content is disseminated without appropriate editorial oversight and is found to conflict with House-adopted policy or established editorial standards, the Council on Communications may recommend correction or clarification in consultation with the Executive Director, and be it further

Resolved, that if the ADA engages external marketing, media, public relations, or research consultants to support messaging that may affect public- or dentist-facing editorial content—such as ADA-branded publications, email communications, or digital platforms—the Council on Communications shall be notified of the engagement and provided an informational summary of its scope and purpose, to ensure alignment with adopted editorial policy and the Council's subject matter responsibilities.

BOARD COMMENT: The Board recognizes the importance of editorial integrity and acknowledges the role of the Council on Communications. As such, the Board unanimously supports Resolution 218 put forth by the Council on Communications as a more reasonable approach to ensuring integrity in ADA

- 1 communications. Additionally, the resources that would be needed to support Resolution 504 are cost
2 prohibitive and would greatly slow ADA real-time communications.

3 **BOARD RECOMMENDATION: Vote No.**

4 **Vote: Resolution 504**

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	No		
DEL VALLE-SEPÚLVEDA	No	KAHL	No	ROSATO	No		