

Resolution No. [Resolution Number] [Type]

Report: [Report] Date Submitted: 07/18/2025

Submitted By: Dr. Steve Saxe, Delegate, Nevada

Reference Committee: [Reference Committee for Worksheet]

Total Net Financial Implication: [Total Net Financial Impl.] Net Dues Impact:

Amount One-time: Amount On-going:

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

ESTABLISHMENT OF THE SPECIAL COMMITTEE ON BRAND INTEGRITY, THE PROFESSION'S REPUTATION, AND PUBLIC TRUST

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").

Member complaints about vendor affiliations have already resulted in distrust, with documented instances where dentists expressed financial harm after engaging with ADA-endorsed vendors. One vendor partnership terminated in 2024 followed multiple reports of widespread issues (*2024 Annual Reports*, page 30). An earlier and more severe vendor-related issue was handled under sealed executive session proceedings in 2008, and while the specifics remain confidential, its inclusion on the House agenda underscores the reputational damage that had occurred (*2024 Manual of the House of Delegates*, page 8, "Reference Committee Report 3").

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

Meanwhile, ADA-controlled media such as Morning Huddle, ADA News, and ADA-sponsored events continue to feature CE programs and practice management vendors without consistent enforcement of vetting protocols. Some of these promoted courses offer short-format training in moderate sedation or surgical procedures without meeting ADA policy, which mandates a minimum of 60 didactic hours and clinical experience in managing 20 patients for moderate sedation training (*2024 Current Policies*, page 127).

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

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

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

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

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 Brand Integrity, the Profession's Reputation, 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.

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

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 Brand Integrity, the Profession's Reputation, 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 Brand Integrity, the Profession's Reputation, 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.

Resolved, that the *Manual of the House of Delegates and Supplemental Information* be further amended by adding the following section after the description of the Strategic Forecasting Committee (additions underscored, deletions stricken through):

Standing Committee on Brand Integrity, the Profession's Reputation, and Public Trust

Duties and Scope of Responsibility:

The Standing Committee on Brand Integrity, the Profession's Reputation, and Public Trust shall:

1. Review and make recommendations regarding non-scientific material published by the ADA or its affiliated entities, 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 support alignment with House-adopted policy, ADA ethical standards, and member values.
2. Advise on and evaluate ADA-controlled materials, including CE advertising, vendor promotions, dentist-facing editorial content, and other communications that carry

- 1 the ADA name or appear on ADA platforms, to ensure reputational consistency
2 with adopted ADA policy, branding principles, and member values.
- 3 3. Evaluate and monitor reputational risk arising from third-party communications,
4 vendor affiliations, public media, or misinformation, and advise on timely corrective
5 responses, clarifications, or strategic interventions to preserve ADA credibility and
6 the reputation of the profession of dentistry.
- 7 4. Operate in coordination with the Board of Trustees, the Council on
8 Communications, and other relevant ADA agencies, with advisory and oversight
9 responsibility limited to non-scientific content, communications, and affiliations that
10 may impact ADA's reputation, brand consistency, or alignment with ADA policy.
- 11 5. Review CE-related promotions and advertisements appearing on ADA-controlled
12 platforms to identify content that may misrepresent compliance with ADA
13 Continuing Education Recognition Program (CERP) standards or ADA policy, and
14 recommend clarifications, corrections, or removal when such promotions involve
15 high-risk procedures such as sedation or specialty-level training.
- 16 6. Identify advertisements or communications on ADA-controlled platforms that
17 appear to conflict with ADA policy, ethical standards, or established criteria, and
18 recommend appropriate removal, revision, or clarification to the responsible
19 governing body or staff authority for further action, using a process that includes
20 notice to the originator, an opportunity to respond, and the option for appeal to the
21 Board of Trustees.
- 22 7. Operate with a commitment to cost-efficiency, using virtual meetings and existing
23 administrative resources where feasible, with implementation funding not to exceed
24 \$50,000 annually without Board of Trustees approval.

25 **Composition:**

- 26 • The Standing Committee on Brand Integrity, the Profession's Reputation, and
27 Public Trust shall consist of seven members of the House of Delegates, appointed
28 annually by the Speaker of the House of Delegates.
- 29 • Members shall have relevant expertise in communications, continuing education,
30 editorial oversight, ethics, or reputational risk management.
- 31 • Members serve for one House session and may be reappointed.
- 32