

Resolution No. [Resolution Number] New

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.

Establishing A Standing Committee on Oversight of ADA Communications 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 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 interests include any entity that produces, markets, resells, or distributes health care goods or services used by patients. This means vendor-sponsored training programs on their own products cannot be CERP-recognized, and should not appear to carry ADA endorsement without the appropriate vetting. Failure to apply these safeguards risks misleading both patients and dentists, while also undermining the value of ADA-recognized specialty training. Member complaints about vendor affiliations have contributed to distrust, with concerns raised over ADA-endorsed partnerships. The 2024 Annual Report (p. 30) highlights ADA's endorsement and partnership programs, noting that reputational risks must be carefully managed. The House has also debated vendor-related reputational issues in prior reference committee discussions, underscoring that such matters rise to the level of governance and warrant oversight.

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

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.

This resolution was written with the explicit intent not to duplicate or supersede the Council on Communications, but to provide the House with a dedicated oversight mechanism for non-scientific communications and reputational risk.

Resolution

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 the *Manual of the House of Delegates and Supplemental Information*, Standing Committees of the House of Delegates, unnumbered paragraph 1, 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 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 further amended by adding the following new section after the description of the Strategic Forecasting Committee (additions underscored, deletions stricken through):

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.**

- 1 4. Operate in coordination with the Council on Communications and other relevant
2 ADA agencies, with oversight responsibility limited to non-scientific content,
3 communications, and affiliations that may impact ADA's reputation, brand
4 consistency, or alignment with ADA policy, and shall not supersede the Council on
5 Communications' duties under Chapter VIII, Section K2 of the ADA Governance
6 and Organizational Manual.
- 7 5. Review CE-related promotions and advertisements appearing on ADA-controlled
8 platforms to identify potential misrepresentation of compliance with ADA
9 Continuing Education Recognition Program (CERP) standards or ADA policy, and
10 refer concerns to the Commission for Continuing Education Provider Recognition
11 (as defined in ADA Bylaws, Chapter IX, Section 30.C) or the appropriate governing
12 body.
- 13 6. Identify advertisements or communications on ADA-controlled platforms that
14 appear to conflict with ADA policy, ethical standards, or established criteria, and
15 recommend appropriate removal, revision, or clarification to the responsible
16 governing body or staff authority for further action, using a process that includes
17 notice to the originator, an opportunity to respond, and the option for appeal to the
18 Board of Trustees.

19 Composition

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

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