

VIRGINIA HOSPITAL & HEALTHCARE ASSOCIATION (VHHA)
STATEMENT ON CONSENSUS AND ADVOCACY CODE OF CONDUCT
Approved by VHHA Board of Directors November 5, 2008

Guiding Principles

Health policy development and political and public advocacy form a cornerstone of the Virginia Hospital & Healthcare Association's (VHHA's) efforts to carry out its mission.

To be an effective advocate, VHHA must participate in state and federal legislative and regulatory proceedings, speaking clearly and collectively for our members on important health policy issues.

VHHA policy positions should benefit the hospital and health system community and those that they serve as a whole.

VHHA health policy positions are established by the VHHA Board of Directors as part of its periodic process for developing its policy framework and policy direction.

VHHA and its members, collectively and individually, will promote the health policy established in this VHHA policy framework with unqualified advocacy support.

VHHA and its members will inform each other of pertinent developments on key health policy issues throughout the advocacy process and will provide mutual support to achieve advocacy goals.

Members will inform VHHA of policy positions, including legislation, that they intend to pursue independently to allow for assessment of the impact of such policies on the membership as a whole. If any member intends to pursue a policy position independently and does not inform VHHA of its intent, the VHHA President and/or Board chairman will discuss the issue with the member as soon as possible after becoming aware of the member's intent in order to determine whether the position is consistent with VHHA's established policy.

When a member intends to pursue a policy position, including legislation, independently, but it is consistent with VHHA's established health policy position, VHHA will provide advocacy support as requested by the member. If such independent policy position will disadvantage some members, VHHA will follow the steps below for situations where there is member dissent on policy positions.

Procedures to be Followed When There is Member Dissent on Policy Issues

The operations of hospitals and health systems are complex as are the issues affecting them, at times making it difficult to achieve consensus on important issues because of differing member circumstances. When a member disagrees with a VHHA policy position approved by the Board as part of its policy framework or a member plans to take independent action, the following steps will be followed:

Notice

- The dissenting member will inform the VHHA President, Senior Vice President/Government Relations and/or Board chairman of the disagreement in a timely manner.

Efforts to resolve

- The Board will discuss and reevaluate its position in a timely and appropriate manner.

If resolution is not possible, but the dissenting member will not pursue or advocate outside VHHA for a policy position, including legislation, that is inconsistent with Board-approved VHHA policy:

- VHHA will maintain and promote its established policy position.
- Representatives of the dissenting member may participate in advocacy strategy discussions on the contested issue.

If resolution is not possible, and the dissenting member intends to pursue and advocate for the inconsistent position with audiences outside the VHHA:

- VHHA will maintain and promote its established policy position.
- Representatives of the dissenting members may not participate in advocacy strategy discussions on the contested issue.
- Representatives of the dissenting member will make clear in all its advocacy activities that it is speaking for itself only and not for VHHA or its members in the hospital and health system community.

The foregoing applies to all VHHA members. VHHA directors in addition are expected to discharge their duties as directors, including their duties as members of committees, in all respects in accordance with their good faith judgment of the best interests of the VHHA.