



Minnesota Hospital Association

Minnesota Hospital Association Statement on Consensus

[Adopted by Board of Directors, January 25, 2002]

Consensus is a position that a substantial majority of members will support.

Introduction

The Association's ability to advocate successfully on behalf of the membership depends upon the unity and cooperation of all MHA members. In all dealings with and on behalf of MHA, the judgments and determinations of the directors, officers and staff will be guided by the rules of greater good and open/honest communication. All MHA members recognize that their individual responsibility is to exercise good faith in matters that involve the broader hospital community. Every effort will be made to arrive at decisions that preserve the unity, cooperation and collective interests of MHA members.

To serve the interests of the association as a whole, MHA will develop consensus on strategic goals through the committee process and the Board of Directors. If major conflicts exist with individual members, the MHA Board of Directors is empowered to manage the conflict and create an appropriate resolution.

Member Responsibilities

While reaching consensus is critical to the association's success, unanimous consent is not always possible. When there is a disagreement with a position of the MHA board, members should be respectful of each other, avoiding actions that would threaten the unity and cooperation of all members. Communication of the disagreement should be made to the Chairman of the Board or President in a timely manner. If the member is going to actively pursue a conflicting position from the MHA Board position, the member's advocates will not participate in MHA's political strategy or tactical discussions on that issue.

On occasions when members pursue initiatives for their individual interests, MHA will make every effort to help them satisfy their responsibilities to the broader membership by:

- a) working with the member or group of members to develop the initiative;
- b) providing such technical support as data, policy, and legal research;
- c) working to resolve differences between and among the members and other stakeholders; and
- d) if approved by the Board of Directors, providing advocacy support for the initiative.

If a member intends to advocate publicly a position on a substantive issue which it believes is in conflict with an existing MHA policy, the member should first inform the Association, by letter to the president or chairman, stating the basis for the disagreement, and give the Association a reasonable but limited amount of time to respond before presenting its position to others outside the Association. Before external dissent takes place, thorough internal discussion will be conducted either to resolve or confirm identified differences. The Association has the responsibility of expeditiously reweighing its original position to determine whether it should be modified. To aid in this internal review, members who initiate this process of dissent should inform the Association of any party to whom they have expressed a contrary position and what the nature of the dialogue was so that this information can be used in the process of reevaluating the Association's position.

If the identified differences are not resolved, MHA recognizes the right of the member to publicly pursue its own position. When presenting its position to others, the dissenting member should make clear that it speaks for itself and not for the Association and the industry. In these instances, all representatives of the members will recuse themselves from association-related strategy discussions.

If the member disagrees with the MHA policy position on an issue but agrees to abide by the group decision and not express their disagreement publicly, then the member, at the discretion of the group, may participate in strategy discussions.