



Wisconsin Medical Society

FAQs and Instructions for Virtual Reference Committees

The Wisconsin Medical Society's primary method of developing policies is through the House of Delegates. The policies adopted by the House of Delegates guide the Society's decisions and activities on a variety of health care issues. Resolutions submitted by Society members provide the framework for this policy development.

Each year, the Speaker of the House of Delegates appoints members to serve on three Reference Committees for the purpose of considering resolutions, receiving testimony at Reference Committee hearings and making recommendations to the House of Delegates relative to the resolutions.

The Society's Virtual Reference Committees allow members to comment on and discuss resolutions in advance of the Annual Meeting as a way to foster greater participation in the policy process. Comments made on the Society website will be reviewed by Reference Committees along with testimony received at traditional in-person Reference Committee hearings conducted in advance of the Annual Meeting.

What are Virtual Reference Committees? Virtual Reference Committees supplement the traditional, live reference committee hearings held in advance of the Wisconsin Medical Society's Annual Meeting. Virtual Reference Committees provide an electronic forum for Society members to review resolutions and review and submit comments regarding resolutions. Virtual Reference Committees are intended to foster robust discussions about resolutions before the live reference committee hearings and to encourage greater participation by members across the state in the assessment and discussion of resolutions.

Who may comment on a resolution through Virtual Reference Committees? Only Society members may review or submit comments on a resolution. Society staff members can review, but not submit, comments. Members who cannot attend the Reference Committees are encouraged to submit comments on resolutions of interest via Virtual Reference Committees. Members who intend to testify at a live reference committee hearing may submit comments via Virtual Reference Committees, but members are encouraged not to duplicate comments/testimony in multiple formats.

What will be done with comments submitted via Virtual Reference Committees? Comments will be posted on the Society's website for viewing by Society members and staff. Comments on a resolution will be submitted to the Reference Committee for that resolution and considered by committee members along with live testimony received by the committee during its hearing.

How do I comment on a resolution via Virtual Reference Committees? Society members can review and comment on resolutions to be considered at the 2019 Annual Meeting by clicking [here](#). (Member login is required; click [here](#) for instructions.) Click on the resolution you wish to comment on and fill out the information under "Comment on this resolution," including your comment in the box provided (responses are required for those fields with an asterisk). Upon clicking "Submit," you will receive an e-mail message confirming that your comment has been submitted. Most comments will be posted within two to three business days.

What information must I provide in order to comment on a resolution and what information will be seen by others about me and my comment? You will be required to provide your first and last names, telephone number, e-mail address, whether you are submitting comments on behalf of yourself, your county medical society, your specialty section or your district, and whether you support, oppose, or are submitting a comment for other purposes (e.g. for information). Your first name, the first initial of your last name, the name of the group if you are submitting the comment on behalf of a specialty section, county medical society or district and the text of your comment will be viewable by other Society members. Your telephone number and e-mail address are required so that Society staff members may contact you if there are questions about your comment. Your e-mail address and phone number will not be posted.

Who will see comments submitted through Virtual Reference Committees? Access to Virtual Reference Committees is limited to those with a valid login to the Wisconsin Medical Society website. The general public will not have access to Virtual Reference Committees. However, while all Society members and staff are cautioned not to share restricted content with non-authorized individuals, the Society cannot guarantee that a resolution or comments will not be shared with others. Members of Reference Committees will review all comments submitted for a resolution that has been referred to that committee.

When can I submit comments or testimony on a resolution? Society members may view resolutions and submit comments through Virtual Reference Committees from February 14 through March 22. Resolutions and comments will remain viewable to members and staff after the comment period has closed through the Annual Meeting, but Society members will not be able to submit comments after the comment period has ended.

Does the Society monitor or moderate Virtual Reference Committees? Society staff administers the Virtual Reference Committee process. Staff will review and post comments – typically within two to three business days after they are submitted. Society staff will not edit comments. The Society reserves the right to not post any comment that is abusive; threatening; vulgar; defamatory; obscene; fraudulent; misleading; in violation of intellectual property rights of others; in violation of HIPAA or otherwise violates an individual's right to privacy; in violation of any law or regulation; constitutes advertising, solicitation, campaigning or proselytizing; or otherwise is offensive or unduly inflammatory. The Society does not approve or endorse any comments, opinions, ideas or advice made via Virtual Reference Committees.

Can comments be flagged for removal or removed by the Society? There is no specific mechanism to request that comments be removed by the Society. Once comments are posted, they will likely remain part of Virtual Reference Committees. However, the Society reserves the right to remove comments in order to comply with applicable law. Any member who believes that a comment is abusive or should be removed for other reasons may report concerns to Society staff member Mark Grapentine (mark.grapentine @wismed.org) who will consider such information or requests on a case-by-case basis.