Vote for bylaw amendments on May referendum

The AAP Board of Directors has approved several bylaw amendments pending ratification by the membership via a referendum. The referendum will be attached to the national and district election ballots, which should have arrived via mail or e-mail in early May. The ballots also are available on the Members Only Channel of the AAP Web site, www.aap.org/moc.

If you have questions regarding these amendments, contact your district chairperson or any member of the Advisory Committee to the Board on Membership. The following bylaws, including highlighted revisions, may be found on the Members Only Channel under national election information.

The amendments relating to AAP membership (Article I) are:

1. Inclusion of certification in pediatrics from the American Osteopathic Board of Pediatrics (AOBP) as an acceptable qualification for Fellowship, Candidate Fellowship and Resident Fellowship. (Sections 7.A.1, 7.C.1, 7.E.1)

While it is difficult to assess whether the board exams offered by the American Board of Pediatrics (ABP) and AOBP are equivalent, there is near uniform agreement in the field, the quality of care delivered to children by osteopathic pediatricians is equivalent. As such, the Board has determined that pediatricians boarded by the AOBP should not be excluded or restricted from membership in the Academy.

2. Eliminate the following language from qualifications for Fellowship and Specialty Fellowship: “...be recognized by the Board of Directors as demonstrating high ethical and professional principles and conduct following the publication of the applicant's name in an official Academy print or electronic publication with opportunity given to the members of the Academy to comment upon the applicant's qualifications,” and replace such language with the following: “The name of each applicant for Fellowship shall be published in an official Academy print and/or electronic publication with opportunity given to the members of the Academy to comment upon the applicant's qualifications. Should any member respond with concern, the concern will be duly investigated and a report made to the Board of Directors.” (Section 7.A.1 and 7.B.1)

The Academy receives many complaints about the length of time required to process Fellow applications. The approval process for new Fellows took four months to allow for the publication of the names of applicants for Fellowship and feedback from the membership at large, followed by formal approval and mailing of membership information. After several years, the Academy had received very few objections, and none of the concerns expressed warranted censure from membership. Thus, the Board determined that this four-month delay was unnecessary.

AAP Department of Membership staff fully review and credential all applicants prior to publishing names and approving applicants for Fellowship. Concerns regarding a member’s qualifications for membership are accepted at all times during his or her membership and addressed accordingly. Fully qualified applicants now receive prompt approval, their benefits start within 30 days and they receive their new member information much sooner. The improvement of member and nonmember with the Academy off to a positive start.

3. Regarding Candidate Fellowship, eliminate the following language: "Except as otherwise provided pursuant to rules and regulations adopted by the Board of Directors from time to time, membership as a Candidate Fellow shall be limited to a period of seven years.” (Section 7.E.1)

In recent years, the ABP eliminated the time limit in which physicians had to sit for their initial board certification exam. Once eligible, candidates now remain eligible for life. The AAP seven-year time limit for Candidate Fellows is out of sync with the current practice of the ABP. To best serve candidates, encourage them to take and pass their boards, and provide them with the support they need to do so, it is proposed that Candidate Fellows remain AAP members until such time they become board certified. Once board certified, Candidate Fellows are strongly encouraged to apply for full Fellow or Specialty Fellow status within two years.

4. Change International Members to International Fellows. (Section 7) This amendment is in response to the overwhelming number of requests from the international pediatric physician community to elevate the International Member category to a similar level as full Fellows. Many of our international colleagues greatly value the benefits of AAP membership and are willing to pay for and support this level of participation. International Fellows must pass the pediatric boards in their home nation and be members in good standing of their pediatric society. The benefits for International Fellows will be the same as full Fellows except they will not be eligible to vote or hold national office. Benefits will be provided by electronic means instead of print.

The amendments related to Governance (Article IV) are:

5. Executive Director. (Section 5) Eliminate language stipulating mandatory one-year appointment and replace with the following language: “The Executive Director shall be appointed by the Board of Directors, shall serve as the executive officer under the terms of an employment agreement approved by the Board of Directors, shall...” The existing language prohibits the Board from exercising flexibility in negotiating the terms of this most critical staff position.

The amendments related to chapters and committees are:

6. Changing title of Chapter Forum Committee to Chapter Forum Management Committee. (Article V; Section 3; Article VI; Sections 4 and 5)

7. Changing name of Chapter Forum to Annual Leadership Forum. (Article VII; Section 1) The responsibilities of the Chapter Forum Committee have expanded from planning the Annual Chapter Forum to providing overall guidance and oversight of chapter-national relations. The Annual Chapter Forum has evolved into an Annual Leadership Forum that now will include the leadership of chapters, committees and sections.

These amendments improve the efficiency of operations and level of service to new and existing members, ensure the delivery of current information to practicing pediatricians, expand the Academy’s influence in the international pediatric community, and reflect important evolutions in how AAP chapters, committees and sections will plan and work collaboratively.

Voting is a privilege of membership. Please exercise it.