

## **Introduction**

In 1994, alPHa amended its Constitution to allow resolutions to be considered at any general meeting of the Association. This was introduced in an effort to improve the timeliness of the resolutions process and to ensure that resolutions requiring immediate action could be processed expeditiously.

Resolutions and position papers are the foundation of alPHa policies and actions. A resolution is a formal statement of intention, and spells out a relevant and specific action that is consistent with alPHa's mission. Resolutions also make a substantive and significant contribution to the Association's public profile and agenda for action.

The purpose of this fact sheet is to provide information on the Association's Resolutions Process and to supply some guidelines that may help in preparing resolutions for alPHa.

## **A. ACCEPTANCE CRITERIA**

### **Eligibility**

For the purposes of the resolutions process, only resolutions from a member of the Association are acted upon. Resolutions may come from any of the following:

- a member board of health;
- a Section Executive Committee, or general meeting of a Section;
- the alPHa Board of Directors, the Executive Committee or a Standing Committee of the Association; or
- an affiliate member organization.

A resolution is not processed until it is submitted by a member and the Association's consideration is specifically requested.

Resolutions must meet the criteria set forth in these guidelines for format and suitability (see "Preparing the Resolution"). If they do not, sponsors will be notified that their resolution, as submitted, is not eligible and it will be returned for revision before reconsideration.

### **Time Frame**

Resolutions should be received by the Association office 45 days in advance of the general meeting so that they can be circulated to the membership prior to that general meeting.

## **Late Resolutions**

Resolutions received in the Association office after the cut-off date, (45 days before the general meeting begins), are dealt with by the Committee as late resolutions. Sponsors of late resolutions are responsible for supplying the general meeting with sufficient copies of the resolution (150) if the member wishes the resolution to be debated. Resolutions brought to the general meeting in this manner will only be debated if time allows and if the convention's wishes are expressed by a two-thirds majority vote.

## **B. PASSAGE OF A RESOLUTION THROUGH alPHa**

**Step 1** The resolution and related public health background information is submitted to the Manager, Administrative and Association Services and is recorded and referred to the appropriate alPHa staff.

**Step 2** alPHa's Advocacy Committee categorizes the resolution as a key strategic direction, an existing alPHa position, a localized issue or different from a current alPHa position and makes a recommendation on it to the Executive Committee. The following action can be taken:

### ***Key Strategic Directions***

The resolution would go forward to the Annual General Meeting for discussion by the delegates. The resolution would be adopted or defeated.

### ***Existing alPHa Position***

The sponsor is notified of the fact this is an existing position and current alPHa actions are reviewed with the sponsor. alPHa should already be advocating the position. Discussion could take place to determine if there any different type of action that alPHa can take or discrepancy in the scope of the issue. All members would be advised of this information.

### ***Localized Issue***

alPHa staff will work with the sponsor to try and resolve the matter by advocating on their behalf, arranging meetings with all stakeholders or using existing contacts within other organizations.

### ***Different From a Current alPHa Position***

The resolution requests that alPHa take a different position than one previously adopted by the Association. alPHa staff will prepare a report outlining the history and the issue. Where appropriate, comments from the affected stakeholders will be sought. The resolution will be placed on the alPHa Board of Directors agenda for attention and decision on action. The Advocacy Committee will be involved as necessary.

**Step 3** An alPHa adopted resolution is forwarded to the appropriate stakeholders. alPHa staff will advocate the positions and undertake the necessary follow-up according to established priorities in order to achieve the desired results. Association members are advised of decisions concerning adopted resolutions, and any results achieved.

**Notes:**

Where two or more resolutions in the same year deal with the same issue, only one composite resolution is presented for debate at the alPHa general meeting. In such cases, all originating members are acknowledged under the resolution.

Any resolution which does not meet the resolutions policy criteria are not presented for debate at the general meeting but will be returned to the sponsor for correction and/or clarification. Any re-submission will be dealt with as a late resolution.

**C. PRESENTATION OF RESOLUTIONS**

Committee recommendations presented on the resolutions will be offered only as a guide to delegates. Delegates always vote on the question before them, not on the recommendation. Committee recommendations will not appear on the resolution once the resolution has been considered.

**D. ELECTION OF RESOLUTIONS CHAIR**

The Executive Committee shall appoint a Resolutions Chair before a general meeting. The Chair will meet with the Executive Committee 45 days prior to the general meeting to consider all resolutions. The Resolutions Chair will be in charge of proceedings of the Resolutions Session at the general meeting.

**E. RESOLUTIONS TO AMEND THE CONSTITUTION**

Resolutions requesting a change in the alPHa Constitution may also be considered at any general meeting of the Association. Such resolutions must be received by the Board of Directors at least sixty (60) days prior to the general meeting. Where such notice has been given to the Board, notice of the resolution shall be circulated to the membership at least thirty (30) prior to the general meeting.

**F. PREPARING THE RESOLUTION**

Type and submit each resolution on a separate page. Include the following required information:

- a short, descriptive title which identifies the issue/matter;

- the sponsor/member's name clearly identified;
- a statement of sponsor commitment outlining actions to be undertaken by them in carrying out the strategy.

Attach a concise summary of any background information and/or documentation supporting the resolution.

Identify a person who will be available to provide clarification if the sponsors are not available.

The sponsor's representative must be present at the Resolution Session of the general meeting to move the resolution from the floor.

### **Writing the Resolution**

All alpha resolutions contain a preamble followed by an operative clause.

The preamble is composed of a number of clauses. The number of clauses depends on the complexity of the issue with which the resolution is dealing. Ideally, however, there should be no more than three clauses to the preamble.

The operative clause contains the actual call to action that the resolution is requesting.

The resolution should answer the following questions:

- What's the problem?
- What's causing the problem?
- What's the best way to solve the problem?

### **Preamble**

The purpose of the preamble is to logically lead to the operative clause. Each clause is a separate but concise paragraph which familiarizes the reader with the nature of the problem and the reason for the request. The reader is then prepared to consider the solution/call to action offered in the operative clause.

### **The Operative Clause**

All operative clauses begin with, "NOW THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED that the Association of Local Public Health Agencies (alpha)...". This is usually then followed with either "request..." or "is opposed to...".

The operative clause, as said before, is the call to action - the very reason the resolution was drafted in the first place. This is the most important part of the resolution and should be written very clearly. There should be no doubt as to what specific action is being requested.

Also, the called-for action must be appropriate to the problem outlined in the preamble. An operative clause should contain only one call to action. The operative clause should state who is to do what and to whom and, if appropriate, how and when.

Keep it simple. Keep it action oriented. And keep it free of ambiguous terms.

A resolution that contains well-chosen words will receive the greatest understanding and will, most likely, succeed in achieving its goal.

**Accompanying Information**

No preamble can be comprehensive enough to give a full account of the situation which gave rise to the resolution. In all cases, supplementary or background information is necessary.

Two methods to enhance the clarification of the "intent" of the resolution are:

1. Often, a resolution passed by a Board is based upon a report received from staff. If this is the case, always include this report with the resolution. If it is not possible to send an entire report, then the essential background information should be extracted.
2. The inclusion of a short memo from the author, which puts in perspective the background that gave rise to the presentation and eventual adoption of the resolution.

Resolutions submitted without adequate background documentation may delay consideration of the resolution until the sponsor has been consulted and material provided outlining the intent of the resolution.

**Sample Format**

TITLE	Request for change or revision, legislation, etc. stating the purpose of the resolution.
SPONSOR	Name of board of health, or sponsoring body
WHEREAS	Explains the situation pertaining to the resolution in logical steps as it now exists.
WHEREAS	.....
WHEREAS	.....
NOW THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED stating concisely what change is requested, of whom, when, etc.	

## G. GUIDELINES FOR CONSIDERING RESOLUTIONS

Resolutions and position papers are the foundation of alPHA policies and actions. A resolution is a formal statement of intention, and spells out a relevant and specific action that is consistent with alPHA's mission, i.e. *alPHA, through a strong and unified voice, advocates for public health policies, programs and services on behalf of member health units in Ontario*. Resolutions also make a substantive and significant contribution to the Association's public profile and agenda for action.

Use the following questions to screen possible resolutions:

### *Is the Topic Relevant and Timely?*

- Does it fall within alPHA's mission statement?
- Will action taken after the general meeting be relevant and/or effective?
- Is the scope of the issue/concern local, provincial or national? Will alPHA have to refer the matter to some other agent or body?
- Has it been or is it currently being addressed by alPHA?

### *It is Practical as a Resolution?*

- Can alPHA directly or indirectly influence the issue/problem?
- Do the resources to carry out the proposed action exist within alPHA? If not, can the necessary resources be assembled in time to make a difference?
- Does it fall within the scope of one or more existing alPHA policies?
- Does it really need to be a resolution?
- Could it be referred to the Board, a Section or standing committee for action?
- Could it be addressed by some other means, e.g. a brief, deputation or letter from the Board?
- Are you willing to work to implement the resolution?

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