

House of Delegates: Yes on CE Standards Changes, No on Dues Proposal

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by Anne Zender, MA

From CE requirements to membership dues to the future of education and ethical practices, participants in the October 2003 House of Delegates meeting discussed issues that affect all members. This article looks at the highlights of the day's work.

New Standards for CE Maintenance

The House approved a proposal to change the standards for maintenance of continuing education units for AHIMA credentials. The measure was developed to simplify the process of deciphering the maintenance requirements for people who hold multiple credentials.

The revised standards, developed by the Council on Certification, create two categories for purposes of continuing education maintenance: associate-based (RHIT, CCA, CCS, and CCS-P) and baccalaureate-based (RHIA, CHP, and CHPS). Every two years, members holding an associate-based credential need to take 20 continuing education units (CEUs) plus 10 CEUs for each additional credential held. Members holding a baccalaureate-based credential need 30 CEUs plus 10 CEUs for each additional credential. For those holding many credentials, the new standards would cap the biennial CEU requirements at 60.

A motion proposed by the Oregon delegation to add an amendment related to applying CEU activity to multiple credentials was defeated.

Dues Adjustment Amendment Defeated

During Team Talks and other meetings this year, AHIMA members discussed a proposed amendment to the AHIMA bylaws that would allow the Board of Directors to authorize a cost of living adjustment to dues. This amendment was not passed by the House. The amendment required a two-thirds majority to pass. It failed to gain the two thirds in a close initial vote (125 in support, 73 opposed) and then in a revote (130 in support, 68 opposed).

The amendment was designed to allow the Board to keep dues in line with expenses without large periodic increases. Under the defeated bylaw, the Board of Directors would have had the authority to make modest cost of living adjustments to dues. The adjustment could not have exceeded the prior year's official US cost of living index, and the House would have had to approve any increase above 8 percent.

Because the amendment was defeated, a motion proposed by the California delegation related to the maximum level of cost of living adjustment the Board could authorize was not considered.

New Committee Name

The House approved a bylaw amendment that changes the name of an AHIMA committee. The amendment changes the name of the Professional Conduct Committee to the Professional Ethics Committee. The change was suggested to keep AHIMA up to date in the nomenclature used by association leadership.

Benchmarking with other organizations suggests that the term "professional conduct" is no longer in general use by other progressive associations. Committees with responsibilities similar to those of the Professional Conduct Committee are now referred to as "ethics" or "professional ethics" committees.

The word “ethics” is also the most descriptive of the committee’s work. For instance, look for its revised AHIMA code of ethics to reflect current HIM practice and the current business climate.

Independent Recognition for Accreditation

The House voted to approve a resolution addressing HIM academic program education. The resolution, drafted by the Council on Accreditation, states that AHIMA now believes that independent recognition by the Council for Higher Education and Accreditation (CHEA) will better serve the needs of all stakeholders in HIM education.

This recognition would represent a change from the current process, in which AHIMA makes recommendations on accrediting decisions to a different entity, the Commission on Accreditation of Allied Health Education Programs (CAAHEP).

CHEA recognition is highly prestigious, and it requires AHIMA’s accreditation process to be top notch. This recognition would enable AHIMA to more directly influence the quality of HIM education. It would also require that AHIMA, rather than CAAHEP, assume responsibility for being accountable to the public served by accreditation. To achieve recognition, certain current procedures will need to be adjusted. The resolution describes what these changes entail.

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