FLORIDA SOCIETY OF MEDICAL ASSISTANTS

A GUIDE FOR ELIGIBLE VOTING MEMBERS AT THE FSMA ANNUAL MEETING

REVISED 5/3/2008

CREDENTIALS:

Credential check in # 1:

The Credential Committee is located near the Registration Desk. The Credentials Desk is open only as specified in your program booklet. The Credentials Committee will verify that you are an eligible voting member as of 12/31 of the year preceding the Annual Meeting of FSMA. Honorary members are not eligible to vote. Eligible voting members will receive a colored index card to use during all voting sessions. Please place your name on the card. This is in case it is lost, it can be returned to the eligible voting member.

There will be no proxy votes allowed at the General Assembly.

Subsequent Credential Checks:

Be prepared to show your credentials card at subsequent credentials verification points at the entrance to all of the General Assembly sessions and for voting.

Only the members that are seated at the close of the first session of the General Assembly will be eligible to vote at the second session of the General Assembly.

BALLOTING PROCEDURES IN THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY

All voting will take place in the General Assembly.

Ballots will include the names of **ALL** candidates, including names of those nominated from the floor.

A majority of votes is necessary for election.

The Tellers distribute ballots. Do not engage in conversation with the Tellers.

Only eligible voting members that are seated during the General Assembly session are eligible to vote.

Spoiled ballots are returned to the Tellers, who will then issue a new ballot.

Pencil marked ballots are acceptable.

Be sure any correction(s) on the ballot is legible.

After marking your ballot, fold it once. Ballots folded together will be rejected.

Ballot boxes are passed by the Tellers to collect the ballots.

Place your ballot in the ballot box. Do not hand to the Tellers.

When all the voting is completed the Tellers will retire to count the votes. The business of the General Assembly will continue until the Chair of the Tellers indicates that the report of the Tellers is ready for announcement by the chair.

STANDING VOTE OR SHOW OF HANDS

When the Speaker calls for a standing vote or show of hands vote, the Tellers appointed will be asked to make the count. Please stand and remain standing (with colored index card in hand) or raise your hand and keep it up until the Tellers have counted you. Then be seated or lower your hand.

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HOW THE FSMA REFERENCE COMMITTEES OPERATE AND WHY YOU SHOULD ATTEND

- Reference Committees shall hold hearings to consider all reports, proposed bylaw changes and resolutions and all issues that are germane to those that are scheduled for presentation to the General Assembly. The Reference Committee will report to the General Assembly with recommendations based on the consensus of opinions expressed by those attending the hearings. The time and room assigned to the Reference Committee will be published in the official program for the Annual Meeting.

- The Reference Committee is composed of active members of the FSMA who are appointed by the Speaker of the General Assembly.

- Each Reference Committee is provided suitable space and time in which to hold an open hearing to discuss items that have been referred to the Committee.

- The members attending each Reference Committee Meeting will be given ample opportunity to present views on all issues germane to the subject areas assigned to each specific Reference Committee.

- The Chair of the Reference Committee is the final authority on the range of topics and the amount of time taken in discussion. No parliamentary authority is present for the Reference Committee Meetings so that members can engage in completely free discussion. Each member shall be limited to two minutes of debate on each question with debate on each being limited to fifteen minutes. A member may not speak a second time on the same question if one who has not spoken asks for the floor and no member shall speak more than twice on the same question.

- The Chair, in presenting each topic of discussion, will ensure that the membership has a full appreciation for the issue calling for additional information as needed among committee members.

- Every voting member should feel free to enter into discussion to express questions or concerns. The Chair will make every effort to make all members feel that their voices have been heard and the entire committee will render an objective report to the General Assembly based on discussion at the Reference Committee Meeting.

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NOW THAT I AM AN ELIGIBLE VOTING MEMBER-WHAT DO I DO?

Appointed by Speaker of the General Assembly

Governing Body ----------General Assembly----------Credential Chair
Page
Tellers
Timekeeper
Sergeant-At-Arms
Reference Committees

- All eligible voting members must be in good standing. Dues must be paid by December 31st preceding the General Assembly.
- All eligible voting members voting during the General Assembly will serve from the opening of the General Assembly of that year until the subsequent Annual Meeting of FSMA.
- All members of the General Assembly shall check in with credentials and be verified as eligible to vote in the General Assembly.
- The General Assembly may transact business by mail, e-mail and/or fax, but in all such cases the affirmative vote of the majority of the eligible voting members shall be necessary for a decision.

As an eligible voting member of the state society:

- Be thoroughly familiar with the current FSMA Bylaws (which can be found on fsmaonline.org) and Roberts Rules of Order Newly Revised.

- Read and study the General Assembly Rules and all reports (which will be posted on the FSMA website) so that you will be informed on all issues to be presented in the General Assembly.

- A voting member decides those matters brought before the General Assembly which could include state policies, bylaw amendments, resolutions, elections of Executive Council Members and Delegates/Alternates to AAMA, **(Remember that student members are not permitted to be a delegate/alternate to the AAMA HOD**) as well as other business that comes before the General Assembly.

- Discuss all items with your chapter officers and as many members as possible.

- Be prepared to vote for Executive Council Members during the annual election. Become familiar with these individuals and those nominated from the floor by talking with other members and chapter members and especially by speaking to the candidates themselves. Examine their qualifications and contributions to the society rather than only considering popularity.

- Time of debate is to be limited and is stated in the General Assembly Rules.

- Members should speak clearly, stating your name and chapter so that the Minutes Committee will record the correct information.

- If a lengthy or complicated motion is to be made by a member or an item discussed in advanced, the member should prepare it in writing and give a copy to the Speaker of the General Assembly and the Minutes Committee at the time the motion is being made. (A page will take it to the appropriate person)

- The member would go to the microphone, wait to be recognized by the Speaker and state, "Madam, Speaker, I move ……"

- The member should completely state the motion and not, "I so move….."

- The member making the motion may speak to the motion first, if desired. But others must be allowed to speak before the member making the motion may speak again.

- All members planning on voting during the General Assembly should attend the Reference Committee Meetings to listen to the discussion, perhaps enter into it. The member should listen carefully during the General Assembly when the decisions of the Reference Committee are read as recommendations for acceptance or rejection by the members.

- You should become familiar with the hotel facilities in advance. Learn where the nearest restrooms are, where the voting will take place, where the General Assembly will be held, etc. in order to avoid being late or having to rush around prior to the meeting.

- Members should maintain a positive, impartial, cooperative and pleasant attitude about the association and the business to be considered.

- Members should be attentive and orderly during the sessions of the General Assembly, considerate of each other and enthusiastic about AAMA/FSMA.

ADDITIONAL TIPS

- To listen and think objectively are the two most important duties you have as a voting member. Consider all issues for the good of the entire association, not just from the standpoint of one individual or chapter. It is your duty to report back to your members of your local chapter. You should remember to keep an open mind. Base your decisions on the deliberations of the General Assembly and not on a preconceived opinion.

- Parliamentary procedure is designed to let a majority accomplish it ultimate goal within a reasonable time. Be prepared to express your views and then be gracious if your opinion does not prevail. Learn to abide by majority rule; this is the basis of our democracy.

- Reference Committees are for everyone. These committee meetings provide an opportunity for all members to express opinions and hear the opinions of others. Everyone is urged to attend these meetings, but you as a voting member are obligated to do so.

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Rules of the General Assembly

I. General Assembly

The governing body of the Florida Society shall be the General Assembly, which shall have the authority to determine the professional policies of the society and the power to amend the Bylaws, act upon such business as may be presented and conduct the annual election of the Executive Council Members, Delegates and Alternates to AAMA.

II. Voting Body

The voting body of the FSMA General Assembly shall consist of all eligible members in good standing of FSMA.

III. Seating of the Eligible Voting Member

The voting body shall be seated in the front of the room. They shall be in their seats **five minutes** before the opening of the business meeting. To facilitate the work of the General Assembly, they will occupy the same seat until final adjournment. No member may leave a session without good cause. No officer or voting member shall be absent from a session without just cause. If an eligible member must leave a session, he/she must surrender their voting card. When that member returns they can receive the card back providing there is not a vote in progress on the floor.

IV. Discussion

When you wish to speak in the General Assembly, approach the nearest microphone, wait to be recognized by the Chair, state your name and your chapter, and continue your comments. Speak clearly into the microphone so your comments may be heard by the delegation. All remarks and discussion will be directed to the Chair. The Chair shall be addressed as “Madam Speaker”.

The Chair with the majority vote of voting members may grant the right to the floor to the non eligible voting member. A member who has been assigned the floor shall be interrupted only for a parliamentary cause. It is out of order to be standing when another member has the floor.

When two or more members rise at about the same time to obtain the floor, all other things being equal, the member who rises first after the floor has been yielded and addresses the Chair is entitled to the floor.

Each member shall be limited to two minutes of debate on each question with debate on each being limited to ten minutes. Additional time may be obtained by a two-thirds (2/3) vote of the voting members. A member may not speak a second time on the same question if one who has not spoken asks for the floor and no member shall speak more than twice on the same question except by two-thirds (2/3) vote of the voting members present and voting.

V. Voting

Orders of the day for the session of the convention will be shown in the official convention program and when once adopted by a majority vote, cannot be deviated from except by a two-thirds (2/3) vote of the General Assembly.

VI. Motions

Motions may be introduced and voted upon ONLY by members of the voting body. It is encouraged that all main motions that are lengthy or involved be presented to the Minutes Committee in writing and signed by the member making the motion before the close of the business session at which the motion was stated.

VII. Point of Information

When a member does not understand the questions and needs clarification they should rise to a “Point of Information”.

VIII. Appointments

The Speaker of the General Assembly shall appoint a Credentials Chair, Reference Committee Chair, Tellers, Sergeant-At-Arms, Timekeeper and Pages.