

Physician Associations: Getting Started

Considerations when running meetings

Who should attend the meetings?

For meetings of the leadership group, the majority of your leadership group should be present in order to hold a meeting (this is called quorum). Unless there is a reason for confidentiality, these meetings should be open to all physicians to attend and observe.

For broader meetings of the general membership, if there are decisions being made that require all members to vote (for example, selecting a leadership group), some form of quorum should be required. This could include using proxies or electronic voting. If no decision making is required, no quorum is required. While meetings of your physician association should be open to all members and members should be encouraged to attend, in practice, many members may not be able to. Physician association members who are not part of your leadership group should also be engaged in other ways between meetings, such as through surveys, focus groups, etc.

How often should we meet?

The OMA recommends meeting more frequently (at least initially) because OHTs are a rapidly developing area of health system transformation. For example, many groups choose to meet monthly to start.

When deciding meeting frequency, consider:

- How often is realistic for members?
- What days and times are best (considering members' timetables)?
- How will the meetings be held (i.e. via telephone, video-conference, etc.)?

There is no minimum number of meetings required.

How much notice should we provide for meetings?

Reasonable notice should be given in advance of a meeting to allow members to make arrangements to attend if possible. Consider holding meetings at a regular date and time (for example, the second Thursday of the month, etc.).

The agenda for the meeting, along with any relevant materials should be provided well in advance of the meeting so that members can come to the meeting prepared for discussion.

In urgent situations, it may be advisable to allow meetings to be held on short notice (for example, between 24 to 48 hour notice).

Who makes the decisions?

Your leadership group should make the majority of decisions for your association. However, for some decisions, such as amendment or termination of your physician association or termination of an individual, it may be appropriate for all members of the group to vote.

It is a lot of work to conduct referendums of the full membership to make decisions, so this approach should be limited for efficiency's sake.



Quorum refers to the minimum number of members that must be present to hold a meeting.

How should we decide quorum?

Quorum ensures that any decisions made are a fair representation of the group's opinion. The standard for quorum is that a majority of your leadership group must be present (i.e. 50% plus one).

If too few people show up to a meeting, then it may not make sense to hold the meeting because they are not a representative sample.

How should we make decisions?

Your leadership group is generally considered to be a democratic group; therefore, the decision of the majority is passed. For most decisions, this means 50% plus one. Full consensus of your leadership group (a unanimous decision) is not typically required. For more important decisions, your group may decide that a larger consensus is necessary. For example, it may be desirable to specify that amendment or termination of your physician association agreement requires 2/3 of your leadership group to agree.

Options for decision making include both informal consensus, such as through a show of hands, or formal vote.



Voting by proxy is when a member who is entitled to vote appoints another person (a proxy holder) to attend a meeting and vote on their behalf.

Should we allow voting by proxy?

For in-person member meetings, it may make sense to allow members who are not able to attend to vote by proxy.