



Section Charter

Section Definition

Sections are created under Article 7 of the Ontario Medical Association (OMA) By-Laws to provide a structure to represent the specialty groupings of members by their areas of clinical practice and provide a means to share information within the clinical, practice-type, or specialty interest-oriented groups of physician members.

Sections also work with other specialties, health-care providers, and government to influence decisions in the best interests of their members.

Sections bring their specialty's perspective to the business of the OMA through various channels including the General Assembly.

More specifically, sections serve to support the following core functions:

- Compensation
- Subject matter expertise
- Engagement, leadership development, and succession planning
- Advocacy
- OMA governance requirements

Section Mandate

In carrying out the functions described above, section responsibilities may include:

- Studying, understanding, and making recommendations as to suitable fees and funding based on services rendered, time consumed, and responsibilities undertaken that will represent reasonable compensation for members
 - Acting and speaking as a recognized authority on behalf of, and for the benefit of, the section members and their interests through appropriate OMA channels
 - Participating in the General Assembly and networks, providing input into the broad directions of the OMA strategic plan and the development of key OMA initiatives and priorities
 - Providing a forum for doctors experienced in a clinical practice area or specialty type to exchange information
 - Acting as a credible and informed resource for the OMA and section membership, playing a key role of connecting members and the association and other decision makers in the health care system
 - Facilitating communication with membership to advance professional harmony, support, collaboration, knowledge sharing, and issue identification
 - Supporting succession planning and leadership development within the Section
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- Assisting and encouraging section members to continually increase their professional knowledge, skills, and proficiency
- Supporting advocacy activities related to section specific health care issues and opportunities that have a positive impact on patients, the profession, and the health care system.
- Actively participating in the General Assembly by selecting delegates to the Priority and Leadership Group and encouraging members to have their voices and issues heard by submitting ideas to the General Assembly
- Holding an annual general meeting to report to all section members on pertinent activities and share financial statements and activities

Section Composition

The association has two types of sections,

- a. Trainee sections, and
- b. Clinical sections

Trainee Sections

The trainee sections are,

- a. Medical Students, and
- b. Residents

Clinical Sections

Any group of members that is primarily interested in a specialty or one or more specialties may apply to the board to be approved as a clinical section of the association.

Application

An application for approval of a clinical section will,

- a. identify the specialty or specialties for the proposed section,
- b. enclose draft rules and regulations for the proposed section (optional), and
- c. be signed by
 - a. at least 50 members, or
 - b. at least 25 members who constitute at least 80% of the total number of members for the specialty listed in the most recent edition of Physicians in Ontario published by the Ontario Physician Reporting Centre (OPRC) who confirm that they will become primary members of the section if it is approved by the Association

OR

- a. other criteria formally developed and approved by the OMA Board of Directors

An application will not restrict a proposed section to,

- a. an “adult” or “pediatric” branch of a Specialty, or
- b. a RCPC or CFPC specialty when both Colleges recognize a specialty in a substantially similar area of medicine

Each section must maintain at least the number of primary members required.

The board will consider the application and, if it satisfies the requirements of this charter, the board will make a recommendation regarding the granting of section status to the applicants.

Membership of Sections

Any member in good standing with the OMA must designate no more than one section as their primary section.

All OMA members will be able to join a primary section relevant to their area of clinical practice. A section's rules and regulations can outline which specialties, certifications, and licenses would be relevant for section membership.

An OMA member may select additional section(s) for membership and will be known as a secondary member of those section(s).

No person will be a member of a section who is not a member of the OMA.

Section Leadership Composition

Sections Executive*

The executive comprises those positions elected by the section membership through the OMA single election process, unless otherwise specified, and may include the following:

- Chair
- Vice-Chair
- Past Chair - *Optional*
- Tariff lead
- Secretary and/or Treasurer - *Optional*
- 4 Members-at-Large plus one (1) for every increment of 2000 members

* A section may opt to not include, through its rules and regulations, any of the above optional executive positions outlined. A section's specific executive composition may be outlined in its rules and regulations. Every section must attempt to fill at least one (1) member-at-large position. The board may consider exceptions to the above executive composition, provided it satisfies the requirements of this charter.

Executive Position Descriptions

Chair

The chair's responsibilities include:

- Understanding the issues that are most important to the section members with respect to their practice area and represent these to the OMA, health system stakeholders, and the media on behalf of the section

- Calling the first meeting of the section executive. Subsequently, meetings may be at the call of the chair or upon a request of a member of the section executive made to the chair
- Facilitating and optimizing the constructive involvement and participation of all members of the section executive
- Approval of section communications to be sent to members
- Calling and overseeing the organization of the section annual general meeting (AGM). An AGM should happen no later than 18 months following the last AGM
- Being the primary point of contact for section business, via other OMA physician leaders and assigned OMA staff
- Fostering a positive culture that is respectful, civil, and collaborative

Vice-Chair

The vice-chair's responsibilities include:

- Understanding the issues that are most important to the section members with respect to their practice area and represent these to the OMA, health system stakeholders, and the media on behalf of the section
- Assisting the chair in their duties and assumes the powers of the chair when absent or unable to perform the chair's duties
- Supporting the chair in providing leadership and in communicating regularly with members
- Fostering a positive culture that is respectful, civil, and collaborative

Past Chair (Optional)

The past chair position will be held by the immediate past chair of the section. The responsibilities of the past chair include:

- Attending executive meetings to maintain continued communication within the section executive
- Assisting in member engagement and succession planning
- Advising the chair, as necessary, for continuity and mentorship purposes
- Fostering a positive culture that is respectful, civil, and collaborative

Tariff Lead

The tariff lead's responsibilities include:

- Managing, in collaboration with the section chair, all matters relating to physician billing, fees, and remuneration, including preparation of documentation and information for submission to relevant OMA committees
- Understanding of the diverse interests and needs of the section membership
- Working with the section executive to ensure appropriate representation of the experience and needs of section members
- Representing the section during physician services agreement negotiations and physician payment/fee setting processes, as directed by the section chair
- Fostering a positive culture that is respectful, civil, and collaborative

*Secretary and/or Treasurer (Optional)**

A section may choose one of the following for its executive composition, as it relates to the secretary and treasurer:

- a. Elect a combined secretary/treasurer (one position)
- b. Elect both a secretary and treasurer (two separate positions)
- c. Elect a secretary only
- d. Elect a treasurer only
- e. No secretary or treasurer

The secretary's responsibilities include:

- Working closely with the section chair in the planning of meetings of the section executive and the section annual general meeting
- Ensuring agendas and other meeting materials, including meeting minutes, are distributed to the members of the section executive and section membership, with OMA staff support
- Fostering a positive culture that is respectful, civil, and collaborative

The treasurer's responsibilities include:

- Providing oversight of the financial affairs of the section in accordance with the OMA financial policy for constituency group funding
- For sections that maintain a discretionary spending account for constituency funds raised, preparing a set of financial statements under generally accepted accounting principles and make them available to all members at least annually
- Fostering a positive culture that is respectful, civil, and collaborative

*If a section opts to forego election of the secretary and/or treasurer position(s), these duties will be assigned to another section executive member(s). The secretary and/or treasurer position(s) may be valuable for large sections and/or those with complicated financial matters.

*Member-at-Large (Optional)**

A member-at-large's responsibilities include:

- Attending executive meetings to discuss, debate, and vote on agenda items/issues to support the work of the section
- Providing input into issues based on their clinical expertise and/or other criteria, as determined by the section executive
- Fostering a positive culture that is respectful, civil, and collaborative

*The section executive has the flexibility to assign specific duties to any member-at-large position based on individual section priorities and needs, which will be outlined in the sections' rules and regulations.

Section Executive Meetings

Section executive meetings will be carried out as follows: *

- Meetings of the section executive will be called by the chair or upon the request of a member of the section executive to the chair. Notice of executive meetings to be provided be in writing no less than 2 weeks prior. Notice of special executive meetings to address urgent and time sensitive issues to be provided in writing no less than 2 days prior.
- Meetings may be held in person or through virtual electronic means that permit all participants to communicate adequately with each other during the meeting.
- The quorum for executive meetings is 50% plus one (1) of the executive membership.

- In the case of a tie vote at a section executive meeting, the otherwise neutral chair will have a casting vote.
- Non-executive members, including invited guests and subject matter experts, may attend meetings of the executive at the discretion of the chair to provide advice and take part in the discussion without voting privileges.

*Represents minimum requirements for meetings. A section may expand on the criteria through its rules and regulations.

Section Executive Elections and Appointments

- Section executive positions are elected in accordance with the OMA Elections Policy, unless otherwise specified.
- An Expression of Interest and appointment process can be adopted for the tariff lead position.
- A member may only run for and vote in elections in the section in which they are a primary member.
- Vacancies may be filled via a by-election in accordance with the OMA Elections Policy or via the OMA established appointment process where a member of the section may, through a resolution of the executive, fill the vacancy.
- With the exception of the tariff lead, appointments and positions elected during a by-election are for the remainder of the term or until the next regularly scheduled Single Election Period, whichever is less.

Section Executive Terms

- The term of office for the section chair, vice-chair, secretary, treasurer, and member-at-large positions is two (2) years and will commence immediately at the conclusion of the OMA AGM.
- The term of office of the tariff lead is three (3) years and will commence immediately following the appointment (where the position is appointed) or at the conclusion of the OMA AGM (where the position is elected).
- The term of office of the past chair is two (2) years, or as determined by the section executive, and will commence immediately after the OMA AGM if a new chair is elected.
- Appointments and positions elected during a by-election are for the remainder of the term or until the next regularly scheduled Single Election Period, whichever is less.
- A member, after serving on the section executive for ten (10) consecutive years, is no longer eligible to be elected in their current position on that section for a period of two (2) years.
- A member may not serve on the section executive for more than 20 years in total.

Section Annual General Meetings

- The annual general meeting of a section's membership will be held at a time and place to be determined by the executive members.
- Meetings may be held in person and/or through virtual electronic means that permit all participants to communicate adequately with each other during the meeting.

- Notice of annual general meetings will be provided to all members in writing at least 30 days prior to the scheduled date.
- Quorum for section general and special meetings is a minimum of ten (10) primary members in good standing. Sections may choose to increase the quorum through the section's rules and regulations.
- In the case of a tie vote at a section annual general meeting, the otherwise neutral chair will have a casting vote.

Special Meetings

- A special meeting of the section may be called by the chair at any time with at least two weeks' notice to all members of the section.
- The section executive may, upon its own authority, and will, upon presentation of a request made in writing by no fewer than fifty (50) section members, give notice to each member of the section of a special meeting of the members in that section. Any such request and the notice will specify the matters to be considered at the meeting or will state that the meeting is to consider all matters within the jurisdiction of a general meeting of the members of the section. Any notice will be provided by the section executive within seven (7) days of receiving the request, and any special meeting will be held no more than three weeks after notice is given. A copy of the notice of any special meetings will be forwarded to the corporate secretary of the OMA at the same time that it is sent to the members of the section.

Delegates to OMA Priority & Leadership Group

- The executive will have the authority to appoint delegates to the Priority and Leadership Group, in accordance with the Priority and Leadership Group eligibility criteria and procedures.

Sub-Committees, Task Forces and Working Groups

- The executive may establish, as required, sub-committees, task forces, and/or working groups to develop a specific policy and/or to accomplish a specific task.

Funding and Remuneration

- The OMA will provide funding to support the work of the sections, in accordance with the OMA constituency finance policy.

Section Rules and Regulation

- The charter represents the minimum baseline governance requirements that all sections must follow. Any section can develop their own complimentary rules and regulations that may expand on the criteria outlined, provided they are still in alignment with the charter.

- Section rules and regulations require approval by the executive and the section membership at an annual general meeting or special meeting of the section membership.

Amendments

- Amendments to this charter are subject to approval of the OMA board of directors.

Approved by the OMA Board of Directors: September 13, 2023