

June 14, 2011

TO: Dr. John Brooks, Chair, AVMA Executive Board
Dr. Dan La Fontaine, Chair, House Advisory Committee

CC: NJVMA Executive Board
Dr. Robert Gordon
Dr. Mark Helfat

FROM: Richard Alampi, NJVMA Executive Director

The NJ VMA's delegate, Dr. Robert Gordon, has retired from the HOD, and the NJVMA's alternate, Dr. Mark Helfat's recent election to the Executive Board will remove him from the HOD, leaving vacancies in both positions.

The NJVMA Executive Board decided to not fill the positions at this time, as it has questions regarding the role and relevance that the HOD has in the 21st century. Additionally, the NJVMA questions the cost/benefit of the HOD.

1. Role- The HOD role as the policy-making body of the AVMA appears to be increasingly ineffective. Policy that the HOD recommends to the Executive Board may not be implemented by the Executive Board if the Board determines that the policy is not in the best interest of the profession or the AVMA. This lack of consensus often leads to repetitious debate of policy items and a lack of speed in addressing issues.

2. Relevance- The NJVMA believes that a governance structure that includes a policy making body that meets twice a year is no longer relevant in the 21st century- things just move too quickly. It appears the Executive Board is aware of this, and does make policy decisions interim of HOD meetings. The reality of the situation is that the HOD is often an impedence, not a catalyst, to forward progress.

3. Cost- The cost of sustaining the two annual HOD meetings is significant. The cost includes expense reimbursement for delegates and alternates to attend the two meetings, plus the substantial amount of staff time needed to prepare for HOD meetings and to staff the meetings. Although difficult to measure, the time given by the volunteer delegates and alternates away from their places of employment amounts to an enormous cost to them. The NJVMA questions if this cost can be justified if the role of the HOD has lost its relevance.

The NJVMA respectfully asks that the AVMA perform an analysis of the cost/benefit of maintaining the HOD and of its role and relevance in moving the profession forward.