



American Telemedicine Association

ATA Member Groups Operations Manual

August 2015

ATA's member groups are an integral part of the Association and are responsible for much of the activity and leadership of ATA. This manual provides guidance and a framework from which the Member Groups operate within ATA.

Official oversight of ATA's member groups is the responsibility of the ATA Committee on Committees. The ATA President-Elect chairs the Committee on Committees. Membership in the committee is composed of the chairs of the SIGs, Chapters, Discussion Groups and Councils.

There are several types of member groups within ATA:

- **Special Interest Groups (SIGs)** provide ATA members with an opportunity to (1) share knowledge, (2) promote and support telemedicine applications within a specialty area (3) provide guidance and information to the ATA membership under the authority of ATA. ATA SIG members actively communicate, meet regularly, sponsor various activities during the year and convene at the ATA Annual Meeting.
- **Chapters** are similar to SIGs but are organized around geographic areas allowing members within a region to communicate and share information. Chapters may encompass a state or an international region.
- **Councils** – represent ATA's Circle members (Industry Council) and Institutions (Institutional Council).
- **Discussion Groups** provide a forum for ATA members with similar interests to communicate and meet with each other during the year and meet at the ATA Annual Meeting.

Establishing an ATA Member Group:

ATA members may petition the ATA President to form a new ATA Member Group. The petition to establish a new Member Group must include a statement of purpose, justification for formation detailing plans and proposed activities, and a minimum of 15 signatures from current ATA members who pledge to participate and support the group's activities. The purpose of the petition is to verify that the group has an established core of ATA members that are interested in its formation and are willing to actively participate in the group on an ongoing basis. The petition should also outline the need for the group and potential goals and priorities.

All new member groups will start as a Discussion Group. After one year, Discussion Groups demonstrating active participation, regular communications, and significant accomplishments at the Discussion Group level may petition to become a SIG or Chapter. In addition to a statement of purpose and justification for formation, the petition must include a minimum of 30 signatures from current ATA members who pledge to participate and support the new SIG or Chapter's activities.

Approval and Moratoriums – The President of the Association, in consultation with the Chair of the Committee on Committees and the Executive Committee, may authorize the formation of a SIG, Chapter or Discussion Group. ATA may place a temporary moratorium on the formation of additional Member Groups to ensure the Association has adequate resources to support the groups.

Initial Leadership – Upon ATA approval of a new Discussion Group, the organizing Chair and Vice Chair will be approved by the President of the ATA and will serve for the initial term up to two years. The approval will be made in consultation with ATA staff. After two years, the Discussion Group Vice Chair will assume leadership and an election will be held by the group membership. After one year, Discussion Groups demonstrating active participation and regular communications may petition to become a SIG or Chapter. If a Discussion Group becomes a SIG or Chapter after the first year during the initial chair's term of service, the chair will serve one additional year to complete the two year term as the new SIG and Chapter Chair.

In addition, there are short-term groups and appointed committees that operate for a period of time with a specific objective. These groups fall outside the purview of this manual. For example, **Policy Teams (Teams)** are short-term member groups that provide strategic information and recommendations to ATA regarding a priority policy issue.

Member Group Operations

A. Discussion Group Operations

Discussion Groups are authorized for two years. Each group will have a HUB resource page for ongoing dialog among the members. The Discussion Group may convene in person at the ATA Annual Meeting and will be listed on the ATA web site. The Chair of the Discussion Group will be responsible for guiding the group's discussions and any ongoing communications with ATA staff. Discussion Groups may petition ATA to be changed to a SIG or Chapter after one year. Please refer to Establishing a Member Group section.

B. SIG and Chapter Operations

SIG & Chapter Leadership Roles & Expectations

Descriptive version

Chair (two-year term): The Chair is the group leader and is responsible for the group's overall direction. The Chair and Vice Chair host regular meetings (conference calls and/or webinars) to discuss the group's activities and deliver educational content. The Chair assumes the position after serving as Vice Chair for two years. The Chair serves for two years and becomes immediate past chair and upon the installation of a new vice chair. Chairs are expected to plan and lead their group's annual meeting

held in conjunction with the ATA annual meeting. In the event the Chair is unable to complete their term, the Vice Chair will be promoted to Chair and an ad-hoc election will be held.

Bulleted Version

Chair

Responsible for the group's overall direction and responsibilities include but not limited to:

- Develops and implements annual goals
- Works closely with the vice chair to plan regular meetings and educational programs
- Assumes position after serving two year term as vice chair
- Plans, leads and attends group's annual meeting in conjunction with the ATA annual meeting
- Participates in quarterly webinars hosted by ATA staff and board liaison
- In the event the chair is unable to complete their term, the vice chair will be promoted and an ad-hoc election will be held

Descriptive version

Vice Chair (two-year term): The Vice Chair is elected by the group's membership (see "Leadership Elections" below) and serves a two-year term. The Vice Chair assists the chair in leading the group and developing and implementing annual goals. The Vice Chair assumes the chair position after two years and a new vice chair is elected. The Vice Chair is a four-year (two as Vice Chair + two as Chair) leadership position and vice chairs are expected to attend ATA annual meetings during their leadership term. In the event a vice chair is unable to complete their term, an ad-hoc election will be held to elect a new Vice Chair to complete the term.

Bulleted Version

Vice Chair

The vice chair is elected by the group's membership (see "Leadership Elections" below) and serves a two-year term. The vice chair's responsibilities include but are not limited to:

- Works with the chair to plan regular meetings and educational programs
- Assumes position after serving two year term as vice chair
- Plans, leads and attends group's annual meeting in conjunction with the ATA annual meeting
- Participates in quarterly webinars hosted by ATA staff and board liaison
- In the event the vice chair is unable to complete their term, an ad-hoc election will be held to elect a new vice chair to complete the term

Leadership Elections – The leadership of a SIG or Chapter consists of a Chair and Vice Chair. The Vice Chair will assume the Chair position after two years each SIG or Chapter will elect a new Vice Chair of the group every two years. The election will take place several months prior to the ATA annual meeting (via the HUB). All ATA members of the SIG or Chapter are eligible to participate and vote. The member group leadership may appoint additional executive committee officers as outlined below.

To elect the Vice Chair, each group will form a nominating committee (NC), who will select one candidate for the role of Vice Chair. The NC will be comprised of 4-5 people including: the Immediate Past Chair of the member group, the current chair and vice chair and ATA staff. The committee will meet via teleconference (or email) to discuss and decide on the Vice Chair candidate for the election/ballot. A member of the NC will contact the candidate of his/her nomination and will collect the candidate's biography. ATA staff will distribute the ballot to the group's ATA HUB page, including

the biography of the individual and voting instructions. Members of the group may vote for the NC's candidate or "write in" the name of another candidate, and ATA staff will track the votes of each group. The voting period for each group will last 2 weeks. After the voting period has closed, ATA staff will announce the winner of the election via the ATA HUB. The term limit for Chair is limited to four years (two successive two-year terms).

Executive Committee – Each SIG or Chapter may establish an executive committee. The executive committee shall consist of the elected leaders of the group (Chair and Vice Chair) and may also include a Secretary and 3-5 other members. The maximum number of people on an executive committee is 8. The other members of the Executive Committee should include a cross-section of representatives from various interests and segments of the group's membership. These may include different types of providers, industry representation, academia, governmental or consumer areas. Appointment or removal of members of the executive committee is the responsibility of the elected Chair in consultation with and with the approval of ATA. Members of the executive committee normally shall serve for two years but no more than four years. Executive committee members typically assume their roles at the Annual Conference, although under special circumstances, a new executive committee member may join the committee at other times.

Other Committees – Any other committee or organized subgroup may be established with the prior approval of ATA.

Establishing Priorities and Goals – Each SIG or Chapter is responsible for developing an annual set of goals and priorities outlining its mission and planned activities for the year. SIG and Chapter leaders collaborate with ATA staff to ensure goals are aligned with ATA strategic goals and priorities. For developing annual goals, SIGs and Chapters should solicit input from their membership either through participation at the ATA Annual Meeting, during periodic conference calls, or ATA HUB dialog. SIG and Chapter leaders are given latitude in developing their work plans which may include such activities as developing practice guidelines, creating a database of activities, developing recommendations for ATA Board action, or sharing information. However, SIG and Chapter leaders should include updates to their respective member group HUB page as part of the work plan. Priorities and goals which include timelines and names of persons who will be responsible for completing each goal should be entered on ATA's standard form and forwarded to the ATA headquarters within one month following the annual meeting for review by the Chair of the Committee on Committees and posting on the group's web page.

Annual Meeting Responsibilities – Each approved SIG or Chapter will host a meeting during ATA's Annual Meeting. The group leadership is responsible for developing the agenda and program content for the meeting. The meeting agenda should be submitted to ATA headquarters at least one month prior to the ATA Annual Meeting so it can be included in the final meeting information. During the Annual Meeting, SIG and Chapter Chairs and Vice Chairs will convene in a leadership lunch meeting with ATA's Chair of the Committee on Committees.

Progress Reports – Each SIG or Chapter is responsible for providing a progress update on their annual goals to ATA:

1. A progress update is due in December. This report should record the progress of the group's goals, activities, and accomplishments to date.
2. An annual progress report due one month prior to the ATA annual meeting. This report should summarize the group's goals, activities, and accomplishments for the year (May – April). The annual progress report may be distributed during the ATA annual meeting and is used for consideration of the SIG and Chapter Achievement Award.

Leadership Responsibilities for Communications – SIG and Chapter leaders are responsible for regular communications with their SIG members and with the ATA staff through participation in conference calls, ATA HUB community postings, and information sharing. At least one representative from each group should participate in quarterly leadership conference calls with the ATA Chair of the Committee on Committees. The purpose of such meetings is to discuss the status of activities, share information among leaders of the groups and discuss any issues affecting group operations. SIG and Chapter leaders are also responsible for developing and maintaining any meeting minutes or summaries that may be needed for posting on the web pages.

SIG and Chapter Achievement Award – The ATA SIG and Chapter Achievement Award will be presented at the ATA Annual conference recognizing outstanding achievements or contributions made by one of ATA's SIG's or Chapters during the previous year. The description of the award and process for selecting the award recipient are found in Addendum A.

ATA Oversight of Member Groups

Discussion Group Review & Evaluation – Discussion Groups are reviewed after the initial 2-year period, and, based on the level of participation, may be renewed for an additional year or retired. Subsequent evaluations are made on an annual basis.

B. SIG and Chapter Review and Evaluation – SIGs and Chapters are subject to a bi-annual review and approval by the Chair of the Committee on Committees in consultation with the ATA President. The review will be based upon reports submitted by the SIG or Chapter over the past two years as well as dialog with the Member Group leaders. Renewal of each SIG and Chapter is based on the level of participation in activities that support ATA's mission and goals and the achievement of the group's stated goals. The group must also demonstrate regular communications with its members, ATA staff and the Chair of the Committee on Committees and maintain updated web pages and HUB groups.

In the event a SIG or Chapter or leader of a group receives an unsatisfactory review, a subsequent review will take place every six months for a one year period. If improvements are not made by the group or the leader, the Chair of the Committee on Committees and the President will determine a course of action to include: (1) the group format is changed to a Discussion Group, (2) the group is suspended (3) the group is retired or (4) the Chair is asked to step aside. If a Member Group is found deficient in membership, to have received unsatisfactory reviews as outlined above, or to have conducted its business in a manner as shall be considered detrimental to the interests of ATA, the Chair of the Committee on Committees and the President have the power to suspend the Member Group. A SIG or Chapter may be reviewed on an ad-hoc basis as required.

Member Group Support for ATA

ATA's member groups are expected to promote the Association and encourage broader participation and membership in ATA. Such activities may include:

- Discussions with leaders of associated professional societies and organizations about ATA and telemedicine;
- Emails sent to prospective members; and/or
- Participation at a related professional meeting either through sponsoring a booth, distributing literature or holding a group forum.

Member Group Restricted Activities

ATA Member Groups are authorized and maintained under the legal and organizational framework of ATA, which provides authorization, financial and staff support. Member groups may recommend policy and actions of the Association for approval by ATA leadership. However, Member Groups are not authorized to raise money, spend funds, make legal commitments, or to speak as a group with any outside bodies without prior approval of the ATA leadership. Legislative and regulatory activity of ATA's member groups must be coordinated with the policy committee and staff and ATA review and approval are necessary before any Member Group draft policy positions can go forward.

ATA approval is required prior to any Member Group publicizing, advertising or marketing a product or policy statement to the membership or public. Such issues as copyright, coordination with ATA policy positions and finance issues should be addressed prior to the release.

Standards and Guidelines

The ATA Board of Directors, working through the Standards and Guidelines Committee, establishes overall positions on guidelines and standards development within the Member Groups. Member Groups must follow the guidelines set forth in the ATA document, Policy and Guidance for ATA Standards and Guidelines and Quality Assurance Initiatives.

Conflicts of Interest and Code of Ethics

The leaders of ATA's SIGs and Chapters are placed in a position of authority within the Association. Therefore, they are subject to the Association's Conflict of Interest Policies.

Becoming a leader of the ATA carries with it an obligation to take Association matters seriously and to devote time to consideration of issues facing this Association. Leaders are required to make decisions based on what is best for the Association, not what may be advantageous to oneself or to one's own organization.

Association leaders must avoid actual and even apparent conflicts of interest when making decisions about what activities/projects/etc. are made for their respective groups. Leaders are prohibited from appropriating for themselves or their organizations opportunities that are under consideration by, or being carried on by, the Association.

Leaders must also disclose to the ATA headquarters their involvement in any business activities that may conflict with, or compete with, any business interests of ATA. Leaders having a personal or business interest in a matter under consideration by the ATA must disclose that interest. Where actual or potential conflicts of interest are determined the leader must recuse him or herself from the associated activity or from the leadership position.

Membership in Member Groups

Membership in SIGs, Chapters and Discussion Groups is open to all ATA members. No restrictions will be placed on membership except that the individual must be a current member of ATA. ATA will provide its members with a variety of mechanisms in which they may join or be removed from a group.

ATA maintains a membership list of each group. The membership list is available to the group leadership but cannot be used in any form without prior ATA permission. No commercial uses can be made of these membership lists.

ATA Support for Member Groups

ATA support for the groups includes providing a web page or listing within the overall ATA web site, an ATA HUB community, conference line, webinar tools and meeting rooms at the annual meeting. ATA staff provides varying levels of support to all member groups and will coordinate use of these Association resources.

I. Web Site

Each SIG, Chapter, or DG will have a section of the ATA web site devoted to the group. Member Group leaders are responsible for reviewing and providing updates for these web pages. Information to be posted should be sent in electronic form to ATA headquarters. It is suggested that information on each web page should include:

1. Name of the Member Group
2. Description of the SIG or Chapter
 - A. State the purpose or mission of the group
 - B. How telemedicine is used in this area
 - C. Goals, priorities and activities for the year
3. Member Group Contact Information
 - A. Name, title, organization, address, of each officer
 - B. Working Groups or sub-committees

II. ATA HUB

Each Member Group shall be provided with an ATA HUB resource page for communications with its members. The ATA HUB community is an open forum, however, anyone who misuses the HUB, as determined by ATA, may be removed.

III. Conference Calls

ATA provides a conference line for all groups to hold conference calls with its members during the year. The service includes a toll-free number for domestic calls. Scheduling calls should be coordinated through ATA staff.

Amendments

This manual may occasionally be amended by ATA. The newest version of the manual will be posted on the ATA web site in the Member Group Section and group leaders will be notified of the latest version of the manual.

Addendum A:

Annual ATA Special Interest Group/Chapter Special Achievement Award

Summary:

The Special Interest Group (SIG)/Chapter Achievement Award will be presented annually recognizing outstanding achievements or contributions made by one of the ATA's SIG's or Chapters during the previous year. Consideration for this award will be based on a two-tier peer review process. The selected SIG or Chapter determined to have contributed the most toward the advancement of the ATA Goals in Telemedicine during that year will receive the award and \$1,000 which will be presented to its Chair(s) at the Annual Meeting.

Award Description:

The recipient of this award will receive \$1000 from ATA funds that may be used for SIG or Chapter educational activities, as recommended by the selected SIG or Chapter Chair(s) and approved by the Chair, Committee on Committees. Examples of appropriate uses of this award include an honorarium for an invited speaker or ATA discounts for new or existing hard working members of the association and its SIG or Chapter. The Chair(s) cannot designate him or herself for this award or discount. If the group uses the award for an ATA annual meeting activity they must receive approval 30 days prior to the meeting.

Selection Process:

1. The SIG and Chapter Chair(s) submit a self-nomination(s) for a project or activity accomplished by the group during the year. Nominations are designated as part of the SIG and Chapter Profile report submitted in March preceding the Annual Meeting.
2. The initial selection of three competitive projects will be made by the Chair, Committee on Committees and ATA Staff.
3. The Chair(s) of the top three finalist projects (selected during the initial review) will be invited to present a brief summary of their project and its positive impact to the other SIG/Chapter Chairs during the scheduled Spring/March SIG & Chapter Leadership Conference Call.
4. After that conference call the SIG and Chapter Chairs will vote by email for his or her preferred project. (Each group may cast up to two votes.)
5. The SIG or Chapter project or activity that receives the majority votes will be the designated winner. In the event there is a tie, the Chair, Committee on Committees, will cast a tie breaking vote representing the ATA.
6. The award will be announced and presented at the Annual Meeting.

Addendum B:

ATA Special Interest Group/Chapter Reward Program

Summary:

The Special Interest Group (SIG)/Chapter Reward Program recognizes contributions made by ATA's SIGs and Chapters to the association. Consideration for this reward will be based on a mid-year review and the below selection criteria.

Reward Description:

Each qualified group will receive (1) complimentary ATA annual meeting registration. The recipient of the complimentary registration will be the group chair. The chair may designate a group leader or member (for outstanding contributions to the group) to receive the award. The reward is good only for the annual meeting year it is received and may not be carried over to the following year.

Selection Criteria:

1. Group submits goals and plans 4 or more conference call meetings per year
2. Group submits 1 or more ATA annual meeting courses and/or delivers 2 or more webinars per year
3. Group leaders attend ATA annual meeting and quarterly leadership conference calls

Additional criteria for consideration may include ATA Standards & Guidelines, ATA annual meeting special sessions, and other special projects that contribute to ATA's mission and growth.

ATA Special Interest Group/Chapter Reward Program reward description and criteria is subject to change.