



Assembly of Delegates Handbook



The AMTA Assembly of Delegates

The Assembly of Delegates (AOD) is:

- A collaborative body of active professional AMTA members, made up of 1-2 elected representative(s) of each of the 51 existing AMTA Chapters.
- A group of like-minded individuals who discuss and debate current ideas and topics that are in the forefront of the massage therapy profession.
- A group who helps to shape the way our industry is viewed locally and on the national stage.

The work of the AOD is ongoing throughout the year. The process includes submissions of Discussion Topics (DT) and Proposed Ideas for a Position Statement (PIPS).

Discussion Topics (DTs) and Proposed Ideas for a Position Statements (PIPS):

- Can be written by anyone but can only be submitted formally by an AMTA member, a chapter, the AMTA National Board of Directors (NBOD), Massage Therapy Foundation (MTF), or National Certification Board of Therapeutic Massage & Bodywork (NCBTMB).
- Are submitted through the Assembly of Delegates Advisory Committee (AODAC) and AODAC AMTA Staff Liaison by e-mail at chapterrelations@amtamassage.org.

The AODAC:

- Initiates the vetting process to ensure the proposal meets criteria for consideration.
- Returns submissions to authors if changes are warranted to meet the criteria.
- Informs authors if submissions are accepted or rejected.
- If the proposals are accepted, they put forth the accepted submission to the AOD for initial review and discussion on the Delegate Forum of the AMTA Volunteer Hub, the online center for active AMTA Volunteer communication and resources.
- Conducts the Annual AOD Meeting, either virtually or in-person, in order for all chapter delegates to deliberate and advance the process and review of the current year's DTs and PIPS.

The Assembly of Delegates Advisory Committee (AODAC) oversees the organization, communication, and overall operation of the Assembly. The AODAC Committee Chair serves as the Moderator of the Annual AOD Meeting and Delegate Forum throughout their assigned term, as appointed by the National AMTA President.

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About This Handbook

The AMTA Assembly of Delegates Handbook is an online resource which provides easy access to the most current and relevant information you will need to prepare for your role as a delegate.

Many members think that delegates are chapter volunteers who only attend the Annual AMTA AOD Meeting. You should know that this position is that and so much more. **Year-round participation is required.**

Delegates are in a unique position; elected to represent their membership at the chapter level, these volunteers are also involved at the national level when collaborating with other delegates as the body of the Assembly. **Delegates are one of the many bridges between the chapters and the National Board of Directors (NBOD),** providing more “voices in the room.”

Here are some questions you might ask:

- What is your job as a Delegate - for the chapter and as a member of the Assembly of Delegates?
- What is your role throughout the year?
- How do you prepare for the Annual AOD Meeting and what expectations and responsibilities will you have?

What you will find in this Handbook is the information needed to be a participating member of the Assembly of Delegates and to serve your chapter in the most meaningful manner.

Being a delegate is an awesome opportunity. Thank you for your willingness to serve your chapter and our association.

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So You Want to Be A Delegate...

If you are considering running for a Delegate position, we recommend that you read this entire Handbook, the [“Making the Decision to Run for Delegate” article](#), and all relevant associated documents in order to make a knowledge-based decision to commit the time and work necessary to fill this important role. Additionally, applicants should be encouraged to consider the following questions when deciding to become a chapter candidate for the position.

1. What is the context of health and wellness in my state?
2. What is impacting massage therapy in my state? (including but not limited to):
 - a) Education requirements
 - b) Regulation
 - c) Continuing education
 - d) Cultural issues
 - e) Socio-economics
 - f) Diversity
 - g) Employment practices

What are the Requirements?

Before running for the delegate position, as part of the application process, a candidate must sign the [AMTA Chapter Volunteer Code of Conduct](#) and [AMTA Assembly of Delegates Code of Conduct](#).

For the elected volunteer for the position of Delegate, some of the requirements include:

- Must be a member of the chapter they represent, a professional member of the AMTA for at least one (1) year, and in good standing at the time of their election and during the time they serve in this role.
- Serving a term of office of two (2) years, beginning at the same time as other elected officers of their AMTA chapter.
- The term limit shall not exceed three (3) consecutive elected terms.

Click [HERE](#) for the full detailed Delegate position description.

Delegate’s Purpose

Delegates gain authority through [National Policy and Bylaws](#) and through election by membership of the chapter they belong.

A delegate represents the massage therapy profession in the AOD and related activities as they pertain to the profession in their state. They keep their chapter leadership and members apprised of timelines and activity of the AOD, as well as the Annual AOD meeting outcomes.

Delegate's Responsibilities

1. Responds to applicable chapter communications and AOD/AODAC communications on a regular and timely basis via phone, email, or other appropriate means.
2. Provides written reports to the chapter board as requested.
3. Participate in the [Delegate Discussion Forum](#) as these discussions pertain to AOD agenda items, discussion items, and AOD duties.
4. Attend chapter meetings as requested by their chapter board to address agenda items pertaining to the work of delegates.
5. Discuss AOD updates with their chapter president periodically/as requested.
6. Maintain a working knowledge of materials relative to the AOD and provided by the AODAC.
7. Prepare and review all necessary material prior to all AOD-related meetings.
8. Attend and participate in all aspects of Assembly of Delegates communication, correspondence, and meetings.
9. Report the actions of the AOD to their chapter membership.
10. If applicable, serve as liaison if your chapter submits (and is approved for) any position statement idea or discussion topic proposals that are put forward for AOD discussion.
11. Provide input to the AOD through the lens of the massage therapy profession in your specific state/district. Input may be provided through the Delegate Forum and during the Annual AOD Meeting during your term of service in a timely fashion.
12. If your contact information (email, telephone) changes, make sure to update your AMTA Account with the National office immediately to stay informed.

NOTE: It is important for all delegates to educate themselves on any issues related to massage in their state/district as this information may be relevant to discussions taking place in the [Delegate Discussion Forum](#) and agenda items before the Annual AOD meeting. This information may include legislative and/or education issues.

Assembly of Delegates Work Timeline

The delegate works with their Chapter members, fellow chapter delegates, delegates from other Chapters, and the AODAC to follow timelines and carry out the assignments and charges applicable to the function of AOD.

Ongoing

- As chapter elections are held and results are finalized, chapter board of directors will promptly submit their delegate rosters and any subsequent updates to the [AODAC AMTA Staff Liaison](#). It is important that the list of delegates is accurately maintained so that each chapter's representative(s) can appropriately gain access to the [AMTA Volunteer Hub](#) and the [Delegate Discussion Forum](#). Chapter rosters can be checked [HERE](#).
- Delegates access the [Delegate Discussion Forum](#) and the Delegate Community Library for additional position-specific educational articles which facilitate preparedness in their role.

Ongoing

- Members/Chapters/National Board of Directors/MTF/NCBTMB should decide if they plan to submit any [Discussion Topics and/or Proposed Ideas for a Position Statement Proposals](#). Items may be submitted at any time throughout the year but to be considered for the forthcoming Annual AOD Meeting, please refer to the [submission timeline](#).

Submission process information and forms can be found [HERE](#).

- New delegates will begin to receive information on accessing the [Delegate Discussion Forum](#). Returning delegates continue to have access from the previous year.

March/April/May

- **Proposed Ideas for a Position Statements (PIPS) and Discussion Topic (DT) proposals** to be considered for the forthcoming Annual AOD Meeting must be sent to [AODAC AMTA Staff Liaison](#) by May 14, 2025

June/July/August

Members of the AODAC will communicate by phone and email to check in with all active delegates to discuss any issues/questions/concerns they may have.

The AODAC will review and provide feedback on the submitted proposals

Final PIPS/DT proposals will be shared with the delegates around eight (8) weeks prior to the forthcoming Annual AOD meeting.

As topics are approved, the AODAC will post the proposal(s) into the [Delegate Discussion Forum](#) for review and discussion by all members of the AOD.

The forthcoming Annual Assembly of Delegates meeting will take place on Wednesday, August 20

Delegates will continue to monitor and participate in the [Delegate Discussion Forum](#) for updates and discussions throughout the remainder of their term.

Late 2025

- The 2025 Annual AOD meeting report will be posted on the [Delegate Discussion Forum](#) and shared with the AMTA Board of Directors.
- Delegates will share the 2025 Annual AOD meeting report and communicate the results with their chapters.

Preparing for the Annual Assembly of Delegates Meeting

Participation in the [Delegate Discussion Forum](#) is an essential part of your position. The Delegate Discussion Forum:

- Allows delegates to stay up-to-date and well informed of the ongoing communication and work being done by members of the AOD throughout the year.
- Will have many threads with important educational pieces.
- Is the virtual center to respectfully discuss the proposed topics that will comprise the business of the forthcoming Annual AOD Meeting, preparing you to “hit the ground running” on the Assembly floor.
- Provide input to the [AOD Meeting Proposal Summaries](#) of information developed to assist in guiding the AOD meeting discussions.
- Get questions answered regarding topics and ideas.
- Share information on chapter opinions regarding topics and ideas.

Share the PIPS and DT proposals (when made available) with your chapter leaders and members to garner feedback.

Advise chapter president, board liaison, or other chapter officers as well as the [AODAC AMTA Staff Liaison](#) immediately if you are not able to participate in the Annual AOD Meeting.

The delegate is responsible for contacting their chapter board of directors to inquire as to what role-specific requirements must be adhered to as dictated in their specific chapter policies and reimbursement guidelines (if/when applicable), in addition to national requirements (see [Delegate position description](#)). Timing may be imperative to meet some or all of these guidelines.

The Annual AOD Meeting: What to Expect

Sample Agenda (Meeting Length: 4 hours)

**this agenda reflects an in-person meeting*

Welcome Delegates

AOD Report

Roll Call

Count delegates present

- *Establish quorum*
- *Establish 2/3 total delegates present*

Adopt Agenda

Adopt Rules of Procedure

Discussion of proposed position statement IDEA(s)

Voting and Prioritization

Break (20 minutes)

Discussion of proposed discussion topic(s)

Voting if necessary

Closing

Small Group Discussions

During the Annual AOD Meeting, delegates will be assigned to small groups of 10 delegates or less. As agenda items are chronologically addressed, the PIPS and DT proposals will be read aloud by a pre-designated delegate onto the floor of the Assembly. Thereafter, the small groups will breakout with assigned group facilitators to help focus discussion and debate for a specific allotment of time. Following the small group breakouts, delegates reconvene as a whole where they will have the opportunity to bring key items from their small group and collaborate with the full AOD.

Dress Code

The dress code for all AOD meetings is business casual.

Assembly of Delegates Voting Procedure

There will be agenda items that will require voting in the AOD.

A quorum is determined at the commencement of the AOD Meeting in order for delegates to vote.

Roll call establishes the number of delegates present. The quorum is $\frac{1}{2}$ the delegates plus 1 for the purpose of establishing a majority. This is called a simple majority.

- A simple majority is used to:
 - accept agendas.
 - rules of procedure.
 - procedural votes that might arise as part of the meeting.
- A 2/3 majority (equal to $\frac{2}{3}$ of all delegates present) is necessary to pass Proposed Ideas for a Position Statement.
- Delegates must be seated when the meeting is called to order by the Moderator:
 - They count in the quorum only if seated
 - They cannot vote if they were not counted as part of the quorum

There may be times when the AOD approves more than one (1) PIPS. If this is the case, a vote will be held to determine the prioritization of the order in which they will be discussed. If the Annual AOD meeting format is In-Person, a tellers committee will be appointed by the Moderator to tally the votes. The results will be reported to the Assembly at the close of the meeting. If a PIPS is approved by the AOD, it is sent to the NBOD for further action.

Annual AOD Meeting Format

In light of the COVID-19 pandemic, numerous processes were put in place to allow the AMTA and its various programs to continue in a safe manner. Because of this, we now have mechanisms in place to move between both IN-PERSON and VIRTUAL meetings. The procedure will vary in each but the essence of the meeting will remain the same: discussion of DT and PIPS in small and large group formats.

General Standards for both VIRTUAL and IN-PERSON Meetings

- The AOD meeting will begin exactly ON TIME. Once the moderator calls the meeting to order and takes roll call, additional delegates may not be seated until after the official break time and roll call is recounted. Check for the exact meeting date and time in latest updates on the Delegate Forum.
- Attendance of the Annual AOD Meeting in its entirety is mandatory for the delegate. You must be seated in the AOD meeting room or, in the case of a virtual format, you must be logged into the virtual meeting online before roll call for your attendance to count. No delegate will be seated after the moderator of the Assembly announces that roll call has begun.
- Delegates will have access to the agenda, rules of procedure, DTs, and PIPS prior to the Annual AOD Meeting.

VIRTUAL Meeting Format

- Delegates will be pre-assigned to small groups for the initial group break-out sessions during the virtual Annual AOD Meeting.
 - Will be assigned a facilitator and notified of your other group members
 - Group will be assigned a reporter, selected from group members
 - Reporter will take notes and report out for the group during the large group meeting
- Delegates will be sent log-in information prior to the Annual AOD Meeting with instructions on how to access the virtual meeting platform that will be used.

- Delegates will also be sent a phone number used to access the conference call during the small group break-out sessions. When time is announced by the moderator, delegates will call into their respective groups. Each group will be guided by a facilitator.
- Agenda, Rules of Procedure, DTs, PIPS, and any supporting documentation will be e-mailed to the delegate prior to the meeting. All this information will be placed on the Delegate Forum for discussion prior to the Annual AOD Meeting.
- Voting, as necessary, will be done through the meeting platform and instructions will be provided at the time of the vote.
- Prior to the virtually held Annual AOD Meeting, the agenda and rules of procedure will be voted on in the Delegate Forum.

IN-PERSON Meeting Format

- The IN-PERSON Annual AOD Meeting is held within the week of the AMTA National Convention in conjunction with the event; usually on Wednesday.
- A badge and ribbon are required to access the AOD floor for the meeting. These credentials will be distributed upon your check-in at the Delegate Registration table within two (2) hours prior to the start of the meeting. Credentials will only be distributed to the named delegate; no alternates or substitutes.
- The Annual AOD Meeting will begin punctually ON TIME; allow plenty of travel time in order to be credentialed and seated no later than the exact start time of the meeting. Check for the exact meeting date and time in the latest updates on the Delegate Forum.
- Attend all chapter-related meetings and committee meetings required by National Bylaws and Policy, Chapter Policy and Standing Rules, AOD Rules, and Delegate Position Description. Attend anything in addition to the above that is assigned by your chapter president or board liaison.

A seating area is provided in the back of the AOD meeting room for other AMTA members to listen to the proceedings.

The Delegate and Chapter Communication: Getting and Giving Input

As a delegate, part of your responsibility is to bring items that will be discussed by the AOD to your membership. Equally important is to inform your members on how they (or your chapter) might submit

something to come before the AOD. Both require you to engage with your chapter's members. Here are some ideas on how you can do that. We encourage you to share things that work for you and your chapter on the Delegate Forum to stimulate ideas from others.

Educate your chapter leadership and members on how to submit an item to the AODAC for possible inclusion on the agenda for the Annual AOD Meeting.

1. Items are in two (2) forms: discussion topics (DTs) and proposed ideas for a position statement (PIPS).
2. Download the [submission forms](#) from the AMTA website and become familiar with the forms and [timeline for submission](#) so you can give direction and assist someone in completing them in a timely manner.
3. There are other resources to download that will help you clarify both PIPS and DT. They can be located in the Delegate Forum Library on the Volunteer Hub:
 - a. Discussion Topic Flow Chart
 - b. Proposed Idea for a Position Statement Flow Chart
4. To help educate chapter leaders/members, here are some suggestions:
 - a. Attend a board meeting and give a brief talk on how to submit these forms.
 - b. Attend a chapter meeting and give a brief talk on the value of submitting ideas and how to do it. Encourage members to collaborate on ideas.
 - c. Have the forms or a link to them with a brief description available on your chapter's website.
 - d. Write a brief article for your chapter's newsletter on the "why's" for both DT's and PIPS encouraging members to bring forward suggestions.
 - e. Ask if there are issues the massage therapy profession faces in your state that might benefit from a national discussion.

After the Annual AOD meeting agenda is in place, discussion items and proposed ideas for a position statement will be made public to delegates. This is when you, as a delegate, want to get input from your members. You may find it helpful to see this as a continued opportunity to educate the membership as well as get member input. As a delegate, assume the role of a facilitator and ask open-ended questions. Open-ended questions are those that cannot be answered with one (1) or two (2) words.

As a delegate, you want to be interested in not only how an item may affect the individual therapist but also your chapter, your state, and the massage therapy profession. You'll want to ask yourself, and members, what are the bigger ramifications of this item throughout your state and profession.

There are some ways to engage the chapter membership. Here are some suggestions:

1. Have a mock AOD at a chapter meeting. Include small group discussion on topics and allow for some time to hear thoughts from the entire group, like in the AOD.

2. Host small group meetings in certain parts of the state or throughout the state where discussions regarding topics can take place.
3. Host an online chat about the various topics/ideas.
4. Have a section on your chapter's website that asks these questions and encourages members to submit their thoughts.
5. Host a "salon" before a chapter meeting to discuss the topics/ideas.
6. Put out an e-blast (electronic communication) with the AOD information and some of your questions with an e-mail address for members to send responses.

Some general questions you might ask regarding proposed ideas for a position statement may be:

1. If this were a position statement (PS) how might it affect your business?
2. If this were a PS how might it affect your chapter?
3. If this were a PS how might it affect our profession?
4. What concerns do you have if this were to become a PS?
5. Is there anything that could be done to address those concerns (i.e. limiting the PS, questioning something about how it might be written, making sure the assigned PS workgroup has certain information as it looks at the research)?
6. Is there anything in your state's statutes that would conflict with this PS idea?

To prepare for discussion items you might need to do a bit of homework. You might ask:

1. What do we know about this topic?
2. Does this topic have an impact on me, the chapter, the state, the profession?
3. Does the impact have a positive or negative effect? If so, how?
4. **VERY IMPORTANT:** Is there some action you would like AMTA to take regarding this item (i.e. what might you recommend)?

This should get you started in working with your chapter in the current AOD format. Remember to use the Delegate Discussion Forum to your advantage. Ask what other delegates are doing that works, share your efforts, or ask for suggestions. Reach out to neighboring state chapters. Get creative and share your creativity!

Delegate Resources

For the most up to date AMTA information, guidelines and tools, please visit the Assembly of Delegates page on the National Website:

[Assembly of Delegates Resource Page](#)

Other Useful Web Links

[AMTA Bylaws](#)

[AMTA Chapter Volunteer Code of Conduct](#)

[AMTA Delegate Code of Conduct](#)

[AMTA Policy](#)

[Delegate Position Description](#)

[AMTA Parliamentary Procedures](#)

[Proposed Idea for a Position Statement Submission Resources](#)

[Discussion Topic Proposal Resources](#)

[Submission Timeline](#)

[Delegate Discussion Forum \(must be an active delegate to access\)](#)

APPENDIX A: List of Acronyms and Abbreviations

(last update 5/1/2021)

ABMP	Associated Bodywork & Massage Professionals
AMTA	American Massage Therapy Association
AOD	Assembly of Delegates
AODAC	Assembly of Delegates Advisory Committee
Assembly	Refers to the Assembly of Delegates
BCETM	Board Certification Exam relative to NCBTMB
BOD	Board of Directors
CE/Continuing Ed	Continuing education
Convention	Annually-held national convention of AMTA
CPC	Chapter Presidents Council
CR	Chapter Relations
CSMT	Community Service Massage Team
CVOP	Chapter Volunteer Orientation Program
DT	Discussion Topic
GR	Government Relations
HOD	House of Delegates
HODOC	House of Delegates Operations Committee
Hub	online center for AMTA Chapter Volunteer communications and resources
Legal	Refers to the Legal Department of AMTA
MBLEx	Massage and Bodywork Licensing Exam
MT	Abbreviation for <u>M</u> assage <u>T</u> herapy or <u>M</u> assage <u>T</u> herapist
MTF	Massage Therapy Foundation

National	abbreviated reference for AMTA as a whole organization
NBOD	National Board of Directors
NCBTMB	National Certification Board for Therapeutic Massage and Bodywork
PIPS	Proposed Idea of a Position Statement
PS	Position statement

APPENDIX B: Definitions

(last update 5/1/2021)

Assembly of Delegates. A collaborative body of active professional AMTA members, made up of 1-2 elected representative(s) of each of the 51 existing AMTA Chapters. This group of like-minded individuals discuss and debate current ideas and topics that are in the forefront of the massage therapy profession, helping to shape the way our industry is viewed locally and on the national stage.

Assembly of Delegates Advisory Committee. A national committee of appointed AMTA members which oversees the organization, communication, and overall operation of the Assembly. The AODAC Committee Chair serves as the Moderator of the Annual AOD Meeting and Delegate Forum throughout their assigned term, as appointed by the National AMTA President.

Assembly of Delegates Meeting Template. A document summarizing the key elements (or points) from the Delegate Forum discussion. This document is used as a guide for the discussions held during the Annual AOD Meeting. Delegates should make sure to read and comment in the Delegate Forum so their thoughts can be included in this template.

Board of Directors. A group of elected AMTA volunteers who jointly supervise the activities of the organization at the chapter (BOD) or national level (NBOD). The powers, duties, and responsibilities of a board of directors are determined by government regulations and the organization's own Policy and Bylaws. As AMTA is an organization with voting members, the board is accountable to the organization's membership at their elected level.

Chapter Volunteer Orientation Program (CVOP). This is one of AMTA's primary volunteer training programs. Each chapter BOD selects volunteers from its membership to participate in this annually-held orientation.

Code of Conduct. Statements of the standards of conduct that define ethical behavior for participants in AMTA activities.

Delegate Discussion Forum. A subsection of the Volunteer Hub which is the primary means of communication for the members of the AOD throughout the year. Members who are able to post information, questions, and comments to the Delegate Forum include current delegates, AODAC AMTA Staff Liaison, AOD Moderator. Members of the AODAC may monitor activity but may not post.

Discussion Topic. A statement that the AOD is charged with reviewing and discussing collaboratively. The purpose of a Discussion Topic is to bring a broad discussion idea forward and in order to gather input with a national lens, not to offer solutions to problems. These topics are about issues concerning the profession, your chapter, and the organization's membership. Any member of AMTA, Chapter BOD, NBOD, national standing committees, NCBTMB, or the MTF may submit a DT by filling out the [Discussion Topic Proposal Form](#) at any time during the year. To be considered for a forthcoming Annual AOD meeting, they must follow the [Submission Timeline](#) set forth for that year's event.

Government Relations. A committee within AMTA at the chapter or national level that helps the organization communicate with bodies of government.

House of Delegates. The preceding body of delegates to the Assembly of Delegates. A group of delegates elected by their chapter membership to debate and vote collaboratively on various Position Statements of the AMTA and Recommendations of organizational changes to the NBOD. The last HOD meeting was held in 2017 before its dissolution.

Massage Therapy Foundation. An organization founded by the American Massage Therapy Association in 1990 with the mission of advancing the knowledge and practice of massage therapy by supporting scientific research, education, and community service. The Foundation is able to provide these services by individual gifts, industry support, and fundraising events.

Position Statement. Describes one side of an arguable viewpoint supported by research. Provides the background and rationale to support a particular viewpoint. Makes the organization's stand on the viewpoint clear to the audience.

Sergeant at Arms. An individual appointed by the AOD Moderator who serves as an officer of the Assembly for enforcement of all rules of the AOD, responsible for and immediate supervision of the AOD floor during the Annual Meeting in-person event.

Volunteer Hub. A limited-access online center for all current active AMTA Volunteer communication and resources generally managed by the National office of AMTA.