

# CFMS COMMITTEE ON HEALTH POLICY – TERMS OF REFERENCE

Approved: September 2013

Revised:

## Background

It is a central mandate of The Canadian Federation of Medical Students to represent medical students at national and international organizations, as well as to the federal government; in fact, “Representation” is encapsulated as one of the CFMS’s three pillars. The CFMS generally remains neutral on issues in medical education or health policy until the general membership has approved a position statement on a given topic at an Annual General Meeting or Spring General Meeting. CFMS executives, other representatives, and indeed any member medical student can submit a position statement for approval, which if passed becomes the official position of the organization. This system ensures robust deliberation has occurred every time the CFMS commits itself to a particular stance, and it also provides an opportunity for grassroots engagement for member medical students.

In 2013, it was noted that the CFMS did not have an established mechanism to follow-up on position statements after they are approved. This resulted in a library of CFMS position statements dating back over a decade – several of which were factually incorrect or out of date, and others touched on issues that are no longer currently relevant. A visitor to the “Position Statements” section of the CFMS website would have difficulty discerning exactly what issues are important to the organization.

It was decided that a policy committee, titled the Committee on Health Policy (COHP), would be ideally placed to review and revise CFMS position documents as well as help set the overarching policy goals of the CFMS. Members would become familiar with CFMS documents through reviewing existing ones, and would then be able to identify gaps and areas to focus on. Moreover, the COHP would be a regular venue whereby CFMS representatives from different constituencies (e.g. global health, education, GAAC) could regularly liaise between General Meetings. Overall, the COHP aims to provide a fair and rigorous mechanism to review existing positions and to propose future directions for new ones. A new national officer, the National Officer of Health Policy (NOHP), was created to lead this portfolio. The following are the terms of reference for the COHP and NOHP:

## Mandate

The COHP shall:

- 1) Review all previously approved position documents<sup>1</sup> and recommend revisions to membership to strengthen individual documents

---

<sup>1</sup> Position documents include position statements as well as any other political or health policy documents

- 2) Ensure a cohesive health policy portfolio, including but not limited to:
  - a. Unifying formatting and document style
  - b. Providing support to other committees or members engaged in the policy development process
  - c. Identifying and resolving discordance or overlap between CFMS positions
- 3) Propose new topics for position documents and help set overall policy goals for the CFMS

### **Composition**

- 1) The COHP shall be chaired by the CFMS National Officer of Health Policy
- 2) The composition of the COHP shall include 11 members:
  - a. (1) CFMS NOHP
  - b. At least (1) Global Health Advocate (GHA)
  - c. At least (1) Government Affairs and Advocacy Committee (GAAC) member
  - d. Remaining committee members shall be drawn from an open call for applications and picked by the VP Government Affairs, the NOHP and the nominations committee in a blinded review process
- 3) The VP Government Affairs, National Officer of Human Rights and Peace, and VP Education will sit on this committee in advisory roles

### **Committee on Health Policy Responsibilities**

The COHP shall; with agreement from the majority of the members of the committee<sup>2</sup>:

- 1) Set policy direction for the CFMS<sup>3</sup>
  - a. Identify and propose policy gaps and ideas for future position documents to NOHP (see NOHP responsibilities)
  - b. Engage in literature searching, policy analysis research and primary data collection, as necessary
  - c. Write position documents
- 2) Review existing position documents on a five year cycle, such that no document will be older than five years old since last approval<sup>4</sup>
  - a. Each time a position document comes up for review in the cycle, general membership will be required to vote to re-approve the document, even if no edits are made
  - b. A position document can be reviewed and revised at any point if the CFMS believes that there is a demonstrable need (i.e. political change, policy window opens, etc.) to review the document before five years have passed
- 3) Recommend changes to position documents, including but not limited to<sup>5</sup>:

---

<sup>2</sup> In the event of a split vote, the NOHP will provide the deciding vote

<sup>3</sup> This in no way affects individual members' ability to propose, amend, or rescind current position papers through delegate motions at an AGM or SGM.

<sup>4</sup> Please see position paper review form for more detailed information on this process

- a. Formatting and style changes
  - b. Inclusion of new research and evidence
  - c. Expansion, deletion or revision of document recommendations
  - d. Combining two or more documents together
  - e. Sunsetting a position document
- 4) Liaise between various committees and executives to provide support for health policy research and development being undertaken by CFMS members
  - 5) Meet as a committee via teleconference (funded by the VP Government Affairs budget line) at least every two months

### **National Officer of Health Policy Responsibilities**

The NOHP shall:

- 1) Chair and organize COHP meetings
    - a. The NOHP shall be directly responsible to the VP Government Affairs, who will then report on the activities of the COHP at CFMS executive meetings.
    - b. Connect with CFMS executive and committees during position paper development and review to promote coherence and a platform for future advocacy.
  - 2) Attend the CFMS Annual General Meeting (AGM), Spring General Meeting (SGM) and Lobby Day, with funding coming out of the VP Government Affairs budget line-item
  - 3) Chair the Motions Committee at AGM and SGM
- 1.

---

<sup>5</sup> The COHP does not have the ability to unilaterally change or sunset a position statement, but requires changes to be approved by the general membership at a Spring or Annual General Meeting.