Four bylaws amendments will be considered by this year’s Delegates on Tuesday, June 27. Please let your state leaders know how you feel about these issues. Contact ISMA Alliance President Kelda Maynard or President-elect Jeanne Darroca.

One amendment being considered would expand the membership categories of the AMA Alliance to include unmarried partners in committed relationships. In May 2006, Alliance President Mary Ann Homer received a letter from Paul A. Wertsch, M.D., chair of the AMA Advisory Committee on Gay, Lesbian, Bisexual and Transgender (GLBT) Issues, asking the Alliance to consider a change to its bylaws allowing Alliance membership for unmarried partners in committed relationships.

This issue was presented for the 2006-2007 Bylaws Committee at the start of the Alliance year. Between June and October, the Bylaws Committee performed comparative research regarding other organizations and held a series of biweekly conference calls. As a result, the committee agreed to propose a change to the membership categories and definitions in order to allow domestic partners eligibility for Alliance membership.

The proposed criteria for defining “domestic partner,” created by the Bylaws Committee in consultation with the AMA’s Corporate Law Department and GLBT Committee are:

(a) “18 years of age or older.
(b) “is in a committed relationship with a physician/resident/medical student (as appropriate); and
(c) “is not related by blood or marriage to the physician/resident/medical student (as applicable) in a manner that would be prohibited in the state in which the partner resides.”

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The Bylaws Committee found that some organizations are moving toward more open membership criteria, although most have not yet decided the issue. The Alliance works to further the aims of the AMA through community programs, projects and services. Today’s Alliance also includes physicians as members who are also members of the AMA.
**President’s Message: From the Toe of the State**

What a privilege it is to serve in the office of State President for our Indiana State Medical Association Alliance. I’m meeting so many wonderful people and feel that I’m able to help out a little when questions arise and I’m able to locate the answer. We have an AMA Alliance director who constantly keeps her state presidents informed of the latest news and asks for news from each of her state presidents as she prepares her reports to our national association. Her name is Shirley Meister, and I hear from her at least once or twice a week. She resides in South Carolina, and Indiana is one of her states. Recently, she asked me to report on the procedure for the silent auction we conduct at our annual state meeting in September. The silent auction benefits the AMA Foundation in its entirety. All proceeds raised from this auction, which goes on throughout the day at our annual meeting, are given to the AMA Foundation. Each county donates a theme basket or a piece of artwork, depending on the desire of the Foundation chairperson, and bidding on the county donations goes on all day. It’s a lot of fun, and it serves as a nice break throughout the day when there is a moment to sneak into the auction room and place a bid or outbid a competitor! In years past, it hadn’t occurred to me that another state might like to implement this practice in their state. I have just always taken it for granted that this is what Indiana does at its annual meeting. How nice it is to share ideas and perhaps inspire another state to pick up a practice that we in Indiana take for granted as part of our routine. This is what the states do when we gather for meetings in varying locations across the country. We share ideas and we work through difficulties and come together with plans for problem solving. There are so many wonderful people working together across this country to help county and state alliances change and grow as needed.

Indiana belongs to the North Central section. This group of states includes: Illinois, Indiana, Iowa, Kansas, Michigan, Minnesota, Missouri, Nebraska, North Dakota, South Dakota, and Wisconsin. I attended the North Central States Alliance Leadership Development Conference March 2-4, 2007 in Omaha, NE. This is a smaller group of individuals than the meetings held in Chicago. At this meeting we discussed legislation, internet predators, identity theft, health projects, membership and the AMA Foundation. We shared information about each of these topics, and each of us went home from this meeting with new information and perhaps some new thoughts on how to approach recurring “bumps in the road.”

Each of us has an opportunity to give of ourselves and give our best every day. Here is an excerpt from “Anyway” The Paradoxical Commandments by Kent M. Keith: “Never forget that you are unique. You are genetically unique, and you are unique in your combination of talent and experience. That means you have something special to contribute. You make that contribution by giving the world your best.”

Certainly tact, strategy, and timing are important. You can look for the right opportunities, or create the right opportunities, to give your best. But even as you work to improve your skills so that you can do better in the future, there is always something you can be doing that represents your best right now. Giving your best is not something you do later, it’s something you do every day. You are already unique. You already have something to offer. If you’re not giving the world your best, what world are you saving it for? I think these words serve as a wonderful reminder that we need to keep the faith and continue working toward our goals. It’s also a great “pick-me-up” when energies are low. Give your best in whatever country you are serving, and remind yourself you are a part of a larger organization, the ISMA Alliance, working to build healthier communities in Indiana.

Kelda Maynard
ISMA Alliance President

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**Project funding available from AMA Foundation**

The AMA Foundation is requesting proposals for the 2007 Fund for Better Health program. Grants made in 2007 will support programs addressing three public health issues:

- Healthy Lifestyles
- Public & Patient Safety
- Uninsured/Underinsured

Visit [www.amafoundation.org/go/fundforbetterhealth](http://www.amafoundation.org/go/fundforbetterhealth) to view guidelines and instructions and to download an application. Applications must arrive in the AMA Foundation office by July 16, 2007. For more information, contact Dina Lindenberg at Dina.lindenberg@ama-assn.org or 312-464-4193.

The ISMA Alliance is also accepting applications for the 2007 County Grant Program. Any qualified county alliance may apply. Projects must support health-related charitable endeavors. A maximum of $500 will be awarded for each program selected. Grants will be presented at the state convention on September 28. Go to [www.ismanet.org/alliance/index.htm](http://www.ismanet.org/alliance/index.htm) for more rules and an application, or contact Jill Bruce at 800-257-4762 or jbruce@ismanet.org.

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While the Alliance operates under its own bylaws and policies and there is no legal obligation for the Alliance to change its membership criteria, it is important to note that the AMA has strong policy opposing discrimination based on sexual orientation.

With an increasing number of states granting spousal rights to domestic partners, and a large percentage of our state and county organizations accepting significant others in committed relations as members, the AMA Alliance believes it is important to study and evaluate these issues. It is essential that the Alliance remain a national organization that grants local autonomy to its individual chapters, and must regularly review its membership criteria to recognize and support developments in the various state and local organizations.

The Bylaws Committee and the Board of Directors believes it is important to present the inquiry from the AMA GLBT Committee to the House of Delegates. Voting on the bylaws amendment to Article IV in June will take place via written ballot in order to maintain a confidential process.

The three remaining amendments are:

- Revision to the Medical Student member category;
- Clarification of the voting rights and privileges of all members; and
- Addition to the Alliance House of Delegates Composition.

Visit [www.amaa.foundation.org/go/fundforbetterhealth](http://www.amaa.foundation.org/go/fundforbetterhealth) to download an application.