MAG MODEL MEDICAL STAFF BYLAWS

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INTRODUCTION TO THE MODEL BYLAWS

Georgia medical staffs are large and small, in rural and urban settings, offering specialty and tertiary general care, on a community and academic basis. To serve this diversity, the MAG Model Medical Staff Bylaws includes options so that each medical staff can use the Model as best suits the needs of that particular medical staff. Wording in brackets [like this] are options from which the medical staff can choose the best solution for its problems or circumstances.

Sources

Abbreviations for the following frequently referenced sources are used in annotations supporting the provisions of the Model:

AMA Policy Compendium  Policy of the American Medical Association
Georgia Regulations  Regulations of the State of Georgia
Georgia Code Section  Statutes of the State of Georgia
HCQIA  Federal Health Care Quality Improvement Act of 1986
JC Standard  20010-Joint Commission Standards for the Accreditation of Hospitals
MAG Policy  Policy of the Medical Association of Georgia

See the Table of Authorities immediately following the Model for full citations to cases, statutes and other resources for physicians, medical staffs and their attorneys.

Disclaimer

The Model Bylaws are provided for the information and education of Georgia physicians and medical staffs regarding the requirements for medical staff organization documents and should not be construed as legal advice. No medical staff should consider this document to be mandatory for its adoption or use. Rather, the Model provides approaches for medical staffs to consider when faced with the challenges of compliance with the many laws, regulations and standards governing medical staff bylaws. Medical staffs are encouraged to consult with an independent medical staff attorney when considering or developing medical staff bylaws, rules and regulations and any amendments to any medical staff organization documents.

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PREAMBLE

Recognizing that the medical staff is responsible for the quality of patient care in the [ ] hospital; and that the hospital has a duty to rely upon the judgment and recommendations of the medical staff in such matters; and recognizing that mutually cooperative efforts of the medical staff and the hospital board of trustees are necessary to fulfill the standards of quality patient care within the hospital set by the medical staff, the physicians, dentists and podiatrists practicing in this hospital hereby organize themselves in conformity with these bylaws to initiate and maintain self-government of the medical staff and thereby determine all matters pertaining to medical care in the hospital; to act on all matters of professional ethics and of patient care quality; and to determine all qualifications for medical staff membership and for clinical privileges.

ARTICLE I. TERMS & PURPOSES

A. Purposes of the Medical Staff Organization

The purposes of this organization are:

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1. Georgia Regulations 290-9-7-.11(b) states, “The medical staff shall be accountable to the governing body for the quality of medical care provided to all patients.”

2. Pending JC standard MS 01.01.01, Element of Performance 6 states, “The organized medical staff enforces the medical staff bylaws, rules and regulations, and policies by recommending action to the governing body in certain circumstances, and taking action in others.”

3. The Overview to the Joint Commission Medical Staff chapter defines self-governance as follows: “Self-governance of the organized medical staff includes the following and is located in the medical staff’s bylaws:

   - Initiating, developing and approving medical staff bylaws and rules and regulations;
   - Approving or disapproving amendments to the medical staff bylaws and rules and regulations;
   - Selecting and removing medical staff officers;
   - Determining the mechanism for establishing and enforcing criteria for delegating oversight responsibilities to practitioners with independent privileges;
   - Determining the mechanism for establishing and maintaining patient care standards and credentialing and delineation of clinical privileges; and
   - Engaging in performance improvement activities.”
1. To engage in performance improvement activities that promote quality care for all patients admitted to or treated in any of the facilities, departments or services of the hospital;

2. To determine the mechanisms for establishing and enforcing criteria for delegating oversight responsibilities to practitioners with independent privileges, for establishing and maintaining patient care standards and for credentialing and delineation of clinical privileges to promote a high level of professional performance of all practitioners;

3. To provide an appropriate educational setting that will maintain scientific standards and that will lead to continuous advancement in professional knowledge and skill;

4. To provide for its self-governance by initiating, developing and approving all medical staff bylaws and rules and regulations, approving or disapproving any amendments to the medical staff bylaws and rules and regulations, and selecting and removing medical staff officers;

5. To provide a means whereby issues or disputes concerning the medical staff and the hospital may be discussed and resolved by the medical staff and the governing body.

B. Purposes of these Bylaws

1. To establish the exclusive means of credentialing, granting or affecting medical staff membership and privileges. No membership or clinical privileges criterion established by these bylaws shall be waived by action of the medical staff, its executive committee, or the board. No member or privileges holder is exempt from corrective action or other provisions of these bylaws because of employment by or contract with the hospital.

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4 “The medical staff of the hospital shall adopt and enforce bylaws and rules and regulations which provide for the self-governance of medical staff activities and accountability to the governing body for the quality of care provided to all patients.” Georgia Regulations 290-9-7-.11(c).

5 Implementing Georgia Regulations 290-9-7-.11(a).2 which state, “The medical staff shall be responsible for the examination of credentials of any candidate for medical staff membership and for any other individuals seeking clinical privileges and for the recommendations to the governing body concerning appointment of such candidates.” Further, as found by the Georgia Court of Appeals in Whitaker v. Houston. “A public hospital authority cannot refuse to follow its existing bylaws concerning staff privileges.”

6 Elements of Performance 1 and 2 for JC standard MS.06.01.05 require that each of the criteria for privileges is used and consistently evaluated for all practitioners. Element of Performance 4 for JC standard MS.06.01.07 states, “The organization’s privilege granting/denial criteria are consistently applied for each requesting practitioner.”

7 Preventing the employed members from circumventing peer review recommendations because of any financial relationship with the hospital.
2. To meet the legal requirements for the medical staff, the hospital and the professionals practicing at hospitals.\(^8\)

C. Terms

1. Administrator means the individual hired by the board to act on its behalf in the overall management of the hospital.

2. Board [of Directors] [of Trustees] means the governing body\(^9\) of the hospital.

3. Clinical privileges or privileges means authorization to provide care, treatment and services as delineated consistent with these bylaws and includes the right to exercise those privileges in the hospital’s facilities unless specifically restricted by action of these bylaws.\(^10\)

4. Day means a calendar day unless otherwise specified in a particular context as “working day,” which is a non-weekend, non-holiday day.

5. Hospital means [_______ Hospital] [and its corporate ownership.]

6. In good standing means, at the time of the assessment of standing, neither his/her membership nor his/her privileges are involuntarily limited, restricted, suspended, or otherwise encumbered for disciplinary reasons.

7. Investigation means the process specifically initiated by action of the Medical Executive Committee to formally determine whether corrective action against a member should be recommended. An investigation does not include the usual activities of departments or of other committees of the medical staff in compliance with the licensing and certification requirements, or preliminary deliberations or

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\(^8\) Georgia Regulations 290-9-7-.11(c) requires that “the medical staff of the hospital shall adopt and enforce bylaws and rules and regulations which provide for the self-governance of medical staff activities and accountability to the governing body for the quality of care provided to all patients.” Also, pending JC standard MS 01.01.01 Element of Performance 4 states, “medical staff bylaws, rules and regulations, and policies, the governing body bylaws, and the hospital policies are compatible with each other and are compliant with law and regulation.”

\(^9\) According to Georgia Regulations 290-9-7-.02 (e), “Governing body means the hospital authority, board of trustees or directors, partnership, corporation, entity, person, or group of persons who maintain and control the hospital.”

\(^10\) Implementing the bylaws language cited in and enforced by the court in \textit{Satilla v. Bell}, at 19, to prevent the hospital from revoking existing privileges granted to medical staff member physicians by extending an exclusive contract to other physicians. Medical staff bylaws should include clear provisions on the effect of exclusive contracts, as the Georgia courts in \textit{Alonso v. Hospital Authority of Henry County}, \textit{Cobb County Kennestone Hospital Authority v. Prince} and \textit{St. Mary’s Hosp. of Athens, Inc. v. Radiology Professional Corporation} have held that physicians can be protected by such provisions, and hospitals are obligated to follow medical staff bylaws regarding clinical privileges and termination of clinical privileges held by physicians with hospital contracts.
inquiries of the Medical Executive Committee to determine whether to order an investigation.11

8. Medical staff12 means the organization of physicians, dentists, and podiatrists created and operated pursuant to the provisions of these bylaws to be responsible and accountable for the quality of patient care provided at the hospital.13

9. Member means a professional holding current membership in the medical staff.

10. Practitioner means any individual engaged in the practice of the profession for which he or she is licensed, certified, or otherwise qualified or authorized to practice.14

11. Respondent means the applicant to or member of the medical staff, or applicant for or holder of clinical privileges, who is the subject of a hearing or appeal.

12. Special notice means written notice mailed, return receipt requested, to a member, respondent, applicant, or other person, at the address as last appears in the official records of the medical staff or the hospital.15

ARTICLE II. MEDICAL STAFF ORGANIZATION16

The medical staff is organized into departments and committees under elected leadership to fulfill its purposes.17

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11 Under the HCQIA, “Each health care entity which… accepts the surrender of clinical privileges of a physician- (i) while the physician is under an investigation by the entity relating to possible incompetence or improper professional conduct shall report…” that physician’s surrender to the National Practitioner Data Bank. A definition of when an investigation begins and what it entails should avoid uncertainty as to when privileges surrenders must be reported, and could lessen the possibility of litigation involving reporting of investigations to the Data Bank, such as in the case of Lee v. Hospital Authority of Colquitt County.

12“Medical staff means the body of licensed physicians, dentists, and/or podiatrists, appointed or approved by the governing body, to which the governing body has assigned responsibility and accountability for the patient care provided at the hospital,” according to Georgia Regulations 290-9-.02 (i).

13 Georgia Regulations 290-9-.11(b), “The medical staff shall be accountable to the governing body for the quality of medical care provided to all patients.”

14 Georgia Regulations 290-9-.02 (q) states, “Practitioner means any individual engaged in the practice of the profession for which they are licensed, certified, or otherwise qualified or authorized to practice.”

15“Except in the instance of summary suspension, hospital notification of possible loss of medical staff membership and/or privileges must be sent by certified mail, return receipt requested, or its equivalent.”

AMA Policy Compendium H-230.970

16 Under pending Joint Commission standard MS 01.01.01, Element of Performance 12, the bylaws include “the structure of the medical staff.”

17Georgia Regulations 290-9-.11 (c) states, “The bylaws and rules and regulations … shall include at a minimum: 2. A plan for administrative organization of the medical staff and committees thereof, which clearly delineates lines of authority, delegation, and responsibility for various tasks and functions…”
A. Leadership

The medical staff organization elects officers, representatives, [department chairs] and committee chairs as stated in this Article.

1. General

a) Qualifications

Only [active] medical staff members in good standing at the time of nomination can be nominated for and serve as officers, representatives, [department chairs] and committee chairs. [A member elected to the office of president-elect shall not be eligible for election to the office of president-elect again until the member has ceased to hold any office for at least one year.] Failure to retain membership in good standing throughout the term of office will create a vacancy in the position.

b) Training Requirements

Each member of the Medical Executive Committee [officer] [department chief] [committee chair] shall fulfill annual leadership training requirements as established by the Medical Executive Committee.

c) Compensation

Each officer [and] [the credentials committee chair] [and the quality improvement committee chair] shall receive an annual stipend in honor of their services to the medical staff in an amount set by the Medical Executive Committee and paid from medical staff funds.

d) Accountability

(1) To the medical staff

Officers, representatives, [department chairs] and committee chairs are accountable to the medical staff in fulfilling the responsibilities of their positions as defined in this article. Medical staff members cannot be fired from their hospital employment or be terminated from hospital contracts as a result of good-faith participation in medical staff activities or fulfilling leadership duties consistent with these bylaws.

(2) To the members

No officer, representative, [department chair] or committee chair shall engage in any punitive or retaliatory action against any medical staff member because that member seeks to exercise any right established under these bylaws, including petitioning for the revocation of any medical staff leader’s position with the medical staff.
2. **Nomination**

(1) **By Nominating Committee.**

The nominating committee shall meet beginning in July of each even numbered year to prepare one or more nominations meeting the qualifications for each leadership position open in the next year, and as needed to prepare nominations for vacancies. It shall secure its nominees consent to be nominated and serve. Prior to the 15th day of the month of October of each [even numbered] year, and as needed as vacancies arise, the nominating committee shall submit to the Medical Executive Committee one or more nominations for each office to be filled. The medical staff office shall post the names of the nominees [in the medical staff lounge] [on the medical staff bulletin board] [on the medical staff website] or otherwise provide written notice to the medical staff\(^\text{18}\) not less than 20 days prior to the medical staff election.

(2) **By Petition.**

Nominations may also be made by petition signed by at least [20 Members] [___\%] of the active staff and filed with the medical staff office at least 10 days prior to the election. The medical staff office shall promptly report the names of additional nominees, if any, to the medical staff, in the same manner as those nominated by the nominations committee.

(3) **Other Nominations.**

In the event that all nominees shall refuse, be disqualified from, or be unable to accept nomination before the election:

(a) the nominating committee shall submit the names of one or more additional nominees to the annual meeting of the medical staff and

(b) nominations shall be permitted from the floor.

(4) **Nominations From the Floor.**

Elections at a meeting of the medical staff shall include nominations from the floor if the nominee is present, qualified, and agrees to serve.

\(^{18}\) Although the entire medical staff may not be granted voting rights, the entire medical staff has a stake in the leadership of the medical staff organization.
3. Elections of Officers and Representatives

a) Schedule

[The president-elect and the secretary-treasurer shall be elected by majority vote in each [even] [odd] numbered year at the annual meeting of the staff and at the end of this term the president-elect shall automatically assume the office of the president.]

[Officers shall be elected at the annual meeting of the medical staff.]

b) Number of Votes

A nominee must receive a majority of all valid votes cast for an office to be elected. If no nominee receives a majority vote, a run-off election shall be held promptly between the two nominees receiving the highest number of votes cast for such office.

c) Balloting

[Balloting shall be by secret written [mailed] ballot at the annual medical staff meeting.] [Voting shall take place at the annual meeting by voice or hand.] [Balloting shall take place on the website or via email.]

d) Terms of Office

[All officers and representatives shall serve a one (1) year term beginning January 1.]

[All officers and representatives shall serve a two (2) year term beginning on the first day of January in each odd numbered year.]

[All officers may be re-elected for a succeeding term.] [Officers [and representatives] may be elected to [one] [additional] [consecutive] term.]

[Officers [and representatives] may not be elected to [additional] [consecutive] terms.]

4. Officers

The medical staff officers are the president, the president-elect, the immediate past president, the secretary, and the treasurer [the secretary-treasurer].

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19 The schedule of elections varies based on the medical staff’s choice of a one-year term of office or a two-year term.
20 Where members may feel inhibited about publicly voting for one nominee instead of another, because of referral patterns, hospital employment, or other factors, secret balloting should be considered.
21 The Overview to the Joint Commission Medical Staff chapter defines medical staff self-governance as including selecting and removing medical staff officers. JC Accreditation Manual for Healthcare Organizations.
a) President

The medical staff president is elected by the [active] medical staff to represent the medical staff as the chief medical officer at the hospital, and shall

(1) call, preside at, and be responsible for the agenda of all meetings of the medical staff organization;

(2) serve as chair of the Medical Executive Committee, and call, preside at, and be responsible for the agenda of all Medical Executive Committee meetings;

(3) appoint medical staff members for [one-year] terms to all standing and special medical staff committees except the Medical Executive Committee, and to any hospital medical staff committees with medical staff representation, unless otherwise provided by these bylaws;

(4) appoint chairs of medical staff committees to [one][two] year terms unless otherwise stipulated in these bylaws;

(5) report the medical staff’s recommendations and concerns and otherwise represent the medical staff at each board meeting and communicate reactions and responses to the medical staff and Medical Executive Committee.22

(6) serve as a member of the Board representing the Medical Staff, as a liaison between the two; to assist in the development of hospital policy; to maintain open communication; to participate in strategic planning; to contribute to oversight of hospital operations; and communicate reactions and responses to the medical staff and Medical Executive Committee.23

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22 Element of Performance #9 of JC Standard LD. 01.03.01 states, “The governing body provides the organized medical staff with the opportunity to be represented at governing body meetings (through attendance and voice) by one or more of its members, as selected by the organized medical staff.”

23 Serving as a member of the board described here differs from serving as a representative before the board as described in the section II. A. 4. a. 1. d. immediately preceding this section. Element of Performance #6 of JC Standard LD.01.01.01 states, “Medical staff members are eligible for full membership in the hospital governance unless legally prohibited.” Some boards are constituted such that medical staff officers may not serve. If hospital governance can permit a medical staff member to serve, “it is the policy of the AMA that physicians who are members of the medical staff shall be eligible for, and should be included in, full membership on hospital governing bodies and their action committees in the same manner as are other knowledgeable and effective individuals. Other physicians also should be considered eligible for membership on the governing body. The hospital medical staff should have the right of representation at all meetings of the governing body by medical staff members elected by the medical staff having the right of attendance, voice and, if appropriate, vote. Compensation to medical staff members for service to the hospital should not preclude the physician’s membership on the hospital governing board.” AMA Policy Compendium H-235.9801. Alternatively, the medical staff may elect board members as medical staff representatives and authorize the medical staff president and other officers to advocate for medical staff interests before the board. See section II. A. 5, below.
(7) serve as or appoint an appropriate medical staff member to serve as spokesperson for the medical staff in its external professional and public relations; and

(8) carry out other responsibilities as established in these bylaws or as are appropriately delegated by the Medical Executive Committee or the medical staff.

b) President-Elect

The medical staff president-elect is elected by the [active] medical staff to assume the president’s responsibilities in his/her absence, and shall

(1) serve as a member of the Medical Executive Committee;

(2) represent the medical staff at each board meeting, along with the medical staff president, and communicate reactions and responses to the medical staff and Medical Executive Committee; 24

(3) [serve as a member of the board representing the medical staff, as a liaison between the two; to assist in the development of hospital policy 25; to maintain open communication; to participate in strategic planning; to contribute to oversight of hospital operations; and communicate reactions and responses to the medical staff and Medical Executive Committee] 26

(4) [automatically assume the office of the presidency upon completion of the president-elect term; and]

24 Element of Performance #5 of JC Standard LD.01.01.01 states, “The medical staff has the right to representation (through attendance and voice) by one or more medical staff members selected by the medical staff, at governing body meetings.” The president-elect can serve as representative before the board in addition to the president or other designated representatives.

25 To implement in part the requirement of Georgia Regulation 290-9-7-.11(c)1 that medical staff bylaws include “a mechanism for participation of medical staff in policy decisions related to patient care in all areas of the hospital.”

26 Serving as a member of the board described here differs from serving as a representative before the board as described in the section II.A.4.a.1.d. immediately preceding this section. Element of Performance #6 of JC Standard LD.01.01.01 states, “Medical staff members are eligible for full membership in the hospital governance unless legally prohibited.” Some boards are constituted such that medical staff officers may not serve as board members. If hospital governance can permit a medical staff member to serve, “it is the policy of the AMA that physicians who are members of the medical staff shall be eligible for, and should be included in, full membership on hospital governing bodies and their action committees in the same manner as are other knowledgeable and effective individuals. Other physicians also should be considered eligible for membership on the governing body. The hospital medical staff should have the right of representation at all meetings of the governing body by medical staff members elected by the medical staff having the right of attendance, voice and, if appropriate, vote. Compensation to medical staff members for service to the hospital should not preclude the physician’s membership on the hospital governing board.” AMA Policy Compendium H-235.9801. Alternatively, the medical staff may elect board members as medical staff representatives and authorize the medical staff president and other officers to advocate for medical staff interests before the board. See section II.A.5, below.
c) Secretary
The medical staff secretary is elected by the [active] medical staff, and shall

(1) serve as a member of the Medical Executive Committee;

(2) oversee the accuracy of the minutes of all medical staff and Medical Executive Committee meetings;  

(3) call Medical Staff meetings on order of the President;

(4) attend to all medical staff correspondence unless otherwise delegated under these medical staff bylaws;

(5) perform such other duties as ordinarily pertain to the office; and

(6) carry out other responsibilities as established in these bylaws or as are appropriately delegated by the Medical Executive Committee or the medical staff.

d) Treasurer
The medical staff treasurer is elected by the [active] medical staff, and shall

(1) serve as a member of the Medical Executive Committee;

(2) account to the Medical Executive Committee and the medical staff for the disbursement and receipt of all medical staff funds;

(3) [chair the medical staff budget committee;]

(4) approve payment of those bills incurred by the medical staff which are consistent with the budget adopted by the Medical Executive Committee;

(5) perform such other duties as ordinarily pertain to the office; and

(6) carry out other responsibilities as established in these bylaws or as are appropriately delegated by the Medical Executive Committee or the medical staff.

e) Secretary-Treasurer
The medical staff secretary-treasurer is elected by the [active] medical staff, and shall

27 Typically medical staff office personnel actually record the minutes but the elected medical staff secretary should oversee the process to assure that the minutes presented for acceptance by the committee or the medical staff organization accurately reflect the actions taken.
(1) serve as a member of the Medical Executive Committee;

(2) oversee the accuracy of the minutes of all medical staff and Medical Executive Committee meetings; 28

(3) call Medical Staff meetings on order of the President;

(4) attend to all medical staff correspondence unless otherwise delegated under these medical staff bylaws;

(5) account to the Medical Executive Committee and the medical staff for the disbursement and receipt of all medical staff funds;

(6) [chair the medical staff budget committee;]

(7) perform such other duties as ordinarily pertain to the office; and

(8) carry out other responsibilities as established in these bylaws or as are appropriately delegated by the Medical Executive Committee or the medical staff.]

f) Immediate Past President

The immediate past president of the medical staff shall

(1) serve as a member of the Medical Executive Committee;

(2) carry out other responsibilities as established in these bylaws or as are appropriately delegated by the Medical Executive Committee or the medical staff.

28 Typically, medical staff office personnel actually record the minutes but the elected medical staff secretary should oversee the process to assure that the minutes presented for acceptance by the committee or the medical staff organization accurately reflect the actions taken.
5. **Representatives**

a) **Board Representatives**

The [2] board representatives are elected by the [active] medical staff to serve as voting board members, and shall

(1) attend all board meetings;

(2) designate one representative to attend and report on board issues to the Medical Executive Committee;

(3) report on board issues to the medical staff;

(4) carry out other responsibilities as established in these bylaws or as are appropriately delegated by the Medical Executive Committee or the medical staff.

b) **Medical Executive Committee Members At Large**

The [4] medical staff representatives are elected by the [active] medical staff to serve as voting Medical Executive Committee members at large, and shall:

(1) attend all Medical Executive Committee meetings;

(2) report on Medical Executive Committee issues to the medical staff;

(3) carry out other responsibilities as established in these bylaws or as are appropriately delegated by the Medical Executive Committee or the medical staff.

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29 Supported by AMA policy, which states, “physicians who are members of the medical staff shall be eligible for, and should be included in, full membership on hospital governing bodies and their action committees in the same manner as are other knowledgeable and effective individuals. Other physicians also should be considered eligible for membership on the governing body. The hospital medical staff should have the right of representation at all meetings of the governing body by medical staff members elected by the medical staff having the right of attendance, voice and, if appropriate, vote. Compensation to medical staff members for service to the hospital should not preclude the physician’s membership on the hospital governing board.” To achieve medical staff representation on the board, without encumbering the medical staff leadership with board membership, the medical staff can elect members specifically to serve as board members.

Element of Performance #6 of JC Standard LD.01.01.01 states, “Medical staff members are eligible for full membership in the hospital governance unless legally prohibited.”

30 Allowing at large representatives may assist the medical staff to comply with JC Standard MS .02.01.01 Element of Performance 3, which provides that “all members of the organized medical staff, of any discipline or specialty, are eligible for membership on the medical staff executive committee.” Under pending JC Standard MS 01.01.01., Element of Performance 22 provides that the medical staff bylaws must include “That the medical staff executive committee includes physicians and may include other and any other individuals as determined by the organized medical staff.” Note that placing non-medical staff members, or non-health care professionals, on the medical executive committee is allowed by the Joint Commission, but is not mandated. This model limits medical executive committee members to members of the medical staff.
c) **AMA OMSS Representative**

The medical staff representative and alternate representative to the American Medical Association Organized Medical Staff Section are elected by the [active] medical staff to represent the medical staff to organized medicine. The OMSS representative and alternative representative must be members of the Medical Association of Georgia and the American Medical Association, and shall

1. serve as a member of and attend all Medical Executive Committee meetings;
2. represent the medical staff at all meetings of the American Medical Association Organized Medical Staff Section;
3. report on AMA OMSS issues and actions to the Medical Executive Committee and the medical staff;
4. carry out other responsibilities as established in these bylaws or as are appropriately delegated by the Medical Executive Committee or the medical staff.

6. **Committee Chairs**

Committee chairs shall be appointed by the president to serve [one][two] year terms unless otherwise stipulated in these bylaws and shall

a) call meetings as set by these bylaws or as necessary to fulfill committee responsibilities;

b) preside at, and be responsible for the agenda of all meetings;

c) carry out other responsibilities as established in these bylaws or as are appropriately delegated by the Medical Executive Committee or the medical staff.

7. **Department Chairs**

Department Chairs shall be elected by the [active] medical staff members of the department to [one][two] year terms unless otherwise stipulated in these bylaws and shall

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31 Every medical staff may appoint a representative and alternate to the American Medical Association Organized Medical Staff Section (“AMA OMSS”). Information regarding the AMA OMSS is available on the AMA website at http://www.ama-assn.org/ama/pub/category/365.html or by calling AMA OMSS staff at (312) 464-4761.
a) Maintain appropriate specialty board certification or establish comparable competence through the medical staff credentialing process;\textsuperscript{32}

b) Oversee department administration;\textsuperscript{33}

c) Continuously review the professional performance of all privileges holders in the department;\textsuperscript{34}

d) Recommend to the Medical Executive Committee all criteria for clinical privileges relevant to the care provided in the department;\textsuperscript{35}

e) Make recommendations to the Medical Executive Committee regarding all requests for privileges within the department;\textsuperscript{36}

f) Assess and recommend to the Medical Executive Committee any off-site sources for needed patient care, treatment, and services not provided by the department or the hospital;\textsuperscript{37}

g) Oversee integration of the department into the hospital’s primary functions;\textsuperscript{38}

h) Oversee the coordination and integration of interdepartmental and intradepartmental services;\textsuperscript{39}

i) [Serve as a member of the Medical Executive Committee;]

j) Oversee the development and implementation of policies and procedures that guide and support the provision of care, treatment, and services;\textsuperscript{40}

k) Recommend the number of qualified and competent persons and the space and other resources needed to provide care, treatment, and services in the department;\textsuperscript{41}

l) Determine the qualifications and competence of department personnel who are not licensed independent practitioners and who provide patient care, treatment, and services;\textsuperscript{42}

\textsuperscript{32} Medical staff bylaws are to define the qualifications under JC standard MS.01.01.01.

\textsuperscript{33} As called for by JC standard MS.01.01.01.

\textsuperscript{34} As called for by JC standard MS.01.01.01.

\textsuperscript{35} As called for by JC standard MS.01.01.01.

\textsuperscript{36} As called for by JC standard MS.01.01.01.

\textsuperscript{37} As called for by JC standard MS.01.01.01.

\textsuperscript{38} As called for by JC standard MS.01.01.01.

\textsuperscript{39} As called for by JC standard MS.01.01.01.

\textsuperscript{40} As called for by JC standard MS.01.01.01.

\textsuperscript{41} As called for by JC standard MS.01.01.01.

\textsuperscript{42} As called for by JC standard MS.01.01.01.
Continuously assess and work toward improvement of the quality of care, treatment, and services through maintenance of quality control programs, as appropriate.\textsuperscript{43}

n) Oversee orientation and continuing education of all persons in the department;\textsuperscript{44}

o) [Appoint a vice chair from among the qualified active staff members in the department to assume the responsibilities and authority of the chair in his/her temporary absence;]

p) carry out other responsibilities as established in these bylaws or as are appropriately delegated by the Medical Executive Committee or the medical staff.

8. [Sections Heads]

Section heads shall be elected by the [active] medical staff members of the section to [one][two] year terms and shall

\textsuperscript{43} As called for by JC standard MS.01.01.01.

\textsuperscript{44} As called for by JC standard MS.01.01.01.
a) Oversee section administration;

b) Continuously review the professional performance of all privileges holders in the section;

c) Recommend to the department chief all criteria for clinical privileges relevant to the care provided in the section;

d) Make recommendations to the department chief regarding all requests for privileges within the section;\(^{45}\)

e) Assess and recommend to the Medical Executive Committee any off-site sources for needed patient care, treatment, and services not provided by the section or the hospital;\(^{46}\)

f) Oversee integration of the section into the hospital’s primary functions;

g) Oversee the development and implementation of policies and procedures that guide and support the provision of care, treatment, and services;

h) Recommend to the department chief the number of qualified and competent persons and the space and other resources needed to provide care, treatment, and services in the section;

i) Make recommendations to the department chief on the qualifications and competence of section personnel who are not licensed independent practitioners and who provide patient care, treatment, and services;

j) Continuously assess and work toward improvement of the quality of care, treatment, and services through maintenance of quality control programs, as appropriate; and

k) Carry out other responsibilities as established in these bylaws or as are appropriately delegated by the Medical Executive Committee or the medical staff. ]

9. **Disclosure of Conflicts of Interest**\(^{47}\)

In order to protect the interests of the medical staff in improving patient care and conducting fair peer review, all medical staff leaders, including officers, department chairs, section heads, medical staff representatives, and medical staff members serving on committees shall disclose potential conflicts of interest as relevant to the

\(^{45}\) As called for by JC standard MS01.01.01.

\(^{46}\) As called for by JC standard MS.01.01.01.

\(^{47}\) AMA policy states that: “Candidates for election or appointment to medical staff offices, department or committee chairs, or the medical executive committee, should disclose in writing to the medical staff, prior to the date of election or appointment, any personal, professional or financial affiliations or responsibilities on behalf of the medical staff; and encourages hospital medical staffs to incorporate a "disclosure of interest" provision in their medical staff bylaws based on this policy statement.” AMA Policy Compendium H-235.970.
position held and the circumstances, consistent with these bylaws. Disclosure of conflicts shall have no bearing on a member’s medical staff membership or clinical privileges. No member may exercise any leadership or committee role unless and until the member completes the conflict of interest disclosure form approved by the Medical Executive Committee as consistent with these bylaws. This section shall be the unique and exclusive mechanism for discerning and acting upon conflicts of interest applicable to medical staff members.\(^{48}\)

Members shall not use or disclose any information obtained as a result of his/her medical staff leadership or committee position for any purpose other than the furtherance of quality medical care in the hospital.

a) Who Discloses

Disclosure is required

(1) By members interested in medical staff leadership positions, prior to nomination, to the nominating committee or member who will be submitting the nomination, and, prior to election, to those eligible to vote;

(2) By committee chairs and committee members, prior to the date the committee appointment begins, to the president;

(3) Annually by members of the following committees to their chairs:

(a) Medical Executive Committee; infection control; pharmacy & therapeutics committee; credentials committee, bylaws committee, institutional review board (or other research-related committees), budget committee;

(b) in committees, including ad hoc committees, and in meetings pursuant to the parameters below.

b) Potential Conflicts to Be Disclosed

Potential conflicts include:

(1) Competitive or personal relationships, activities, or interests that may inappropriately influence a member’s decisions or actions;\(^ {49}\)

(2) Grants or other financial, academic or professional relationships involving research relating to decisions under review;\(^ {50}\)

(3) Ownership held by a member or his/her immediate family in the hospital or the system of which the hospital is a part or affiliated;\(^ {51}\)

\(^{48}\) Clarifying those hospital conflicts of interests policies do not apply to medical staff members.

\(^{49}\) To make known matters which could prejudice a member for or against another professional in peer review.

\(^{50}\) To address bias by members involved in research.
(4) Ownership of material financial interests in any company that furnishes goods or services to the hospital or is seeking to provide goods or services to the hospital; 52

(5) Current or imminent personal compensation arrangements with the hospital under the terms of a contract or employment; 53

(6) Ownership in or directorship or other leadership or employment by a managed care company that contracts with or could contract with the hospital; 54

(7) Receipt of gifts including goods, services, or honoraria from the hospital or any company or person who contracts with or otherwise sells to the hospital.

c) Conflicts Resolution

(1) A member shall recuse himself/herself if the member reasonably believes that his/her ability to render a fair and independent decision is or may be affected by a conflict of interest.

(2) If a majority of voting members of the committee or in the staff meeting vote that the member should be excused from discussion or voting, due to conflict of interest, the chair shall excuse the member.

(3) If a member discloses a potential conflict of interest and requests a vote regarding excusing the member, the member shall leave the room while the issue is being discussed and voted upon.

(4) The minutes of the meeting shall include the names of those excused for conflicts and the nature of the conflicts involved.

10. Absence, Resignation and Removal

a) Absence

(1) Temporary Absence of Officers

In case of temporary absence [of less than three weeks], the following officer coverage shall facilitate medical staff operation:

51 To make known a financial bias that favors the hospital which might influence a member’s position on matters in which the hospital and medical staff have differing views.

52 To make known a financial bias that favors the hospital which might influence a member’s position on matters in which the hospital and medical staff have differing views.

53 To make known the possibility that the hospital has extraordinary influence over the member.

54 To make known a financial bias that favors the hospital which might influence a member’s position on matters in which the hospital and medical staff have differing views.
(a) in the president’s absence, the president-elect shall assume all duties of the president.

(b) in the absence of both the president and the president elect, the secretary [secretary-treasurer] shall assume all the duties of the president.

(c) in the absence of the president, the president elect, and the secretary, the treasurer shall assume all the authority and responsibilities of the president and the secretary.

(d) in the absence of the president, the vice president, the secretary and the treasurer [secretary-treasurer], the immediate past president shall assume all the duties of the president, the secretary and the treasurer.

(e) in the absence of the president, the vice president, the secretary and the treasurer [the secretary treasurer] and the immediate past president, the executive committee shall elect a presiding chair, and shall as a committee carry out all the duties and have the authority and responsibilities of the offices.

(2) Temporary Absence of Department Chairs, [Section Heads] and Committee Chairs

In the absence of Department Chairs, [Section Heads] and Committee Chairs, the vice-chief, assistant head or vice-chair shall assume all duties of the absent leader. In the absence of a vice-chief, assistant head or vice-chair, the Medical Executive Committee shall name a temporary leader to assume the duties of the position.

b) Leave of Absence

If a medical staff leader or committee members takes a leave of absence from medical staff membership for any reason, their medical staff leadership and committee position(s) will be deemed resigned, and the position(s) will be filled consistent with these bylaws.

[If a medical staff leader takes a leave of absence from medical staff membership for any reason, the leave of absence will be addressed as a temporary absence from leadership under these bylaws.]

c) Resignation

(1) Resignation of Leadership Position

A medical staff leader may resign, effective immediately or upon a date specified, in writing, or verbally stating, the resignation to a medical staff officer or department chief. Any verbal resignation shall be immediately documented by the officer or chief receiving the resignation, with a copy to the resigning leader.

(2) Resignation of Committee Membership

A member may resign committee membership for good cause, effective immediately or upon a date specified, in writing to the committee chair. Failure to meet committee
membership requirements will be included in the evaluation for any renewal of medical staff membership and may result in denial of medical staff membership renewal.55

d) Removal of Officers, 56 Representatives, Department Chairs, Committee Chairs, And Committee Members

(1) Removal of Officers and Representatives

Any officer or representative may be removed from leadership without assigning specific cause by the affirmative vote of 51% of Active Medical Staff Members in a medical staff meeting attended by [mail or email balloting participated in by] a majority of the active staff members.

(2) Removal of Department Chief or Vice Chief [and Section Head or Assistant Head]

Any department [or section] leader may be removed from leadership without assigning specific cause by the affirmative vote of 51% of Active Medical Staff Members in a department [or section] meeting attended by [mail or email balloting participated in by] a majority of the active staff members of the department [or section].

(3) Removal of Committee Member 57

If a member of a committee fails to carry out the duties of committee membership, or commits malfeasance as a committee member, or if any other good cause exists, that member may be removed [by vote of the committee,] [or] [by the president, subject to approval by the Medical Executive Committee] [or] [by the Medical Executive Committee]. If the member at issue is a member of the Medical Executive Committee, he/she shall not be involved in the discussion or vote on his/her removal, but may make a statement in his/her defense to the Medical Executive Committee prior to the discussion and vote.

(4) Automatic Removal

A leader or committee members shall be automatically removed from any and all medical staff organization positions upon loss of medical staff membership.

(5) Effect of Removal

Removal shall not of itself constitute a diminution of the member’s medical staff membership or privileges, or otherwise give rise to any right to hearing or appeal.

55 To enforce membership duties to participate in medical staff organization activities.
56 Under JC MS.01.01.01 Element of Performance 18, the Medical Staff Bylaws must include “The process, as determined by the organized medical staff and approved by the governing body, by which the organized medical staff selects and/or elects and removes the medical staff officers.”
57 Pending Joint Commission standard MS 01.01.01, Element of Performance 21, calls for medical staff bylaws to include “the process, as determined by the organized medical staff and approved by the governing body, for selecting and/or electing and removing the medical executive committee members.” This section provides the process for removal of members from all medical staff committees, including the medical executive committee, and as part of the medical staff bylaws, is approved by the medical staff and the board.
B. Services

The medical staff is organized into the following services:

- Medicine
- Surgery
- Obstetrics

Medical staff members shall serve as Service Directors and fulfill the following responsibilities [see responsibilities for department chairs above at section II.A.7. Service Director recommendations shall become effective only when acted upon by a designated medical staff committee.]

B. Departments [and Sections]

1. Medicine and Surgery

All members will be members of either the Department of Surgery or the Department of Medicine as determined by the Medical Executive Committee. The Medical and Surgical Departments may be divided into clinical sections subject to the approval of the Medical Executive Committee.

1. Roster of Departments

Members may have privileges in more than one department but shall be granted membership in only one medical staff department. [The roster of current medical staff departments and sections is available in the medical staff office.]

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58 For non-departmentalized hospital medical staffs.
59 To allow for a simple departmentalization.
60 No law or standards requires listing the departments in the medical staff bylaws. Particularly if departments are subject to frequent mergers, additions or other changes, a listing outside the medical staff bylaws may be useful.
a) Anesthesiology

b) [Clinical Services, comprised of hospital-based specialties under hospital contract: Anesthesiology, Emergency, ICU, Pathology, Physical Medicine, Radiology, Radiation Therapy]

c) Emergency
d) Family Medicine
e) Intensive Care
f) Internal Medicine
g) Neurosurgery
h) Obstetrics & Gynecology
i) Orthopaedic Surgery
j) Pathology
k) Pediatrics
l) Physical Medicine
m) Psychiatry
n) Radiation Therapy
o) Radiology
p) Surgery

2. Changes in Departments

Recommendations to add, eliminate or consolidate departments shall be submitted by medical staff members to the Medical Executive Committee with documentation supporting the recommendation. The Medical Executive Committee shall study the recommendation, and if adopted, shall refer the action to the medical staff bylaws committee and credentials committee for recommendations as to implementation of the recommendation.

3. Department Functions

As appropriately determined by the department and consistent with these bylaws, department functions shall be discharged under the leadership of the department chair.
Each department

a) Develops and recommends to the chair for further recommendation to the Medical Executive Committee the criteria for clinical privileges in the department, specifying minimum training, experience and qualifications for each privilege.

b) Reviews and develops recommendations for action on applicants seeking membership and privileges within the department;

c) Develops and recommends changes in staffing, space and other hospital resources as needed to support privileges being requested or exercised in the department;

d) Develops recommendations for the establishment of standards for measuring the quality, appropriateness and improvement of patient care furnished in the department;

e) Establishes focused evaluation processes for care in the department consistent with these bylaws, including chart review, practice pattern monitoring, proctoring, external peer review, and discussion with other professionals involved in the care of the same patients, for new members and members with new privileges, and for focused review or investigation.

f) Develops standards and recommendations for implantable devices and other medical equipment and devices used in the exercise of privileges in the department;

g) Establishes surgical and other procedural schedules for procedures performed under privileges exercised in the department;

h) Adopts, repeals, or revises departmental rules and regulations by a majority vote of [active staff] members of the department [present at] [participating electronically or otherwise in] any meeting at which a quorum exists. Such rules and regulations may include criteria for department members to hold departmental office which may be developed by the individual departments as appropriate. All departmental rules

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61 Element of Performance 36 for Joint Commission standard MS standard MS.01.01.01 calls for the department chair to recommend privilege criteria to the medical staff.

62 Mandated by Georgia Regulation 290-9-7-.11 (a) 2(vii) which states, “Minimum requirements for medical staff appointments and clinical privileges shall include… (c)ongruity of the qualifications and/or training requirements with the privilege requested.…”

63 Element of Performance 1 for JC standard MS.06.01.01 states, “There is a process to determine whether sufficient space, equipment, staffing, and financial resources are in place or available within a specified time frame to support each requested privilege.

64 JC standard MS.08.01.01 states “the organized medical staff defines the circumstances requiring monitoring and evaluation of a practitioner’s professional performance.”

65 As described in the Rationale for JC MS.08.01.01.

66 Element of Performance 1 for JC standard MS.08.01.01 states that “A period of focused professional practice evaluation is implemented for all initially requested privileges.”

67 Element of Performance 1 for JC standard MS.08.01.01 states that “The organized medical staff develops criteria to be used for evaluation the performance of practitioners when issues affecting the provision of safe, high quality patient care are identified.”
and regulations shall be submitted to the medical staff executive committee for final review and approval prior to their implementation;

i) Carries out functions delegated to the department by the medical staff, the Medical Executive Committee or otherwise by operation of these bylaws.

4. [Sections]

[Sections of clinical subspecialties and specialties may be organized within a department for purposes of education, peer review, and self-government with approval of the Medical Executive Committee. Five or more members of a department with similar clinical interests shall submit to the chief a written proposal of rationale, organization structure, rules and regulations for a section consistent with the overall department and medical staff policies, including commitments to serve as a section leaders until the next election. If approved by the department, the petition and proposed organizational structure and rules and regulations shall be submitted to the Executive Committee for approval. If approved, sections shall carry out for the section the duties stipulated for departments in this Article but shall direct recommendations to the department chair.]

C. Committees

Unless otherwise provided by these bylaws, all medical staff committees report to the Medical Executive Committee. Members shall be appointed by the president from among the medical staff membership, taking into consideration financial relationships with the hospital and other potential conflicts of interest, and may be removed by the president for cause, which must be disclosed in the notice of removal. Subcommittees of any medical staff committee may be established by the committee chair to carry out such functions of the committee as the chair assigns and to report to the parent committee. Subcommittees may include members other than those on the parent committee, but each subcommittee shall be chaired by a member of the parent committee, [except as otherwise provided in these Bylaws.]

In addition to the medical staff committees established under these bylaws, the president may, or shall at the direction of the Medical Executive Committee, appoint special committees to assist the medical staff in carrying out its functions. Each special committee’s composition and responsibilities shall be documented in Medical Executive Committee minutes. A special committee shall meet at the call of its chair, and report monthly to the Medical Executive Committee. A special committee shall expire when its responsibilities are completed, at most within one year, unless extended for good cause or sooner terminated by the Medical Executive Committee.

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68 According to Georgia Regulation 290-9-7-.11, “…The bylaws may provide for the exercise of the medical staff’s authority through committees. …”
1. Bioethics Committee

a) Composition.
The bioethics committee shall be composed of [five] members selected on basis of interest and diversity of expertise and experience; [an ethicist]; a representative of the religious community appointed by the executive committee; a representative appointed by hospital administration, and a representative appointed by the nursing staff. An Active Staff member shall chair the Committee.

b) Duties.
The bioethics committee:

(1) develops for adoption by the executive committee, and approval as appropriate by the board, any medical staff and hospital policies regarding the bioethics of patient care and treatment at this hospital, including the “Do Not Resuscitate” policy;
(2) provides consultation upon referral by the executive committee or the board;

(3) provides consultation upon appropriate request from patients, patient families, and other hospital community members;

(4) supports or provides educational opportunities for medical and hospital staff regarding bioethics;

(5) maintains confidentiality of all patient and peer review information;  
(6) meets [at least monthly and] at the call of the chair as necessary to fulfill its duties in a timely manner.

The consultations and recommendations of the bioethics committee are not binding, but rather are consultative in nature.

2. Budget Committee

a) Composition

The budget committee consists of [two] members of the medical staff and the medical staff treasurer [secretary-treasurer] who will serve as committee chair. Members shall serve three (3) year terms on a staggered basis, subject to re-appointment.

b) Duties

The budget committee:

(1) Determines the hospital resources and financial support the medical staff requires for the administrative activities involved to fulfill its duties as established under these bylaws, and works with the board to develop related parts of the medical staff budget.
(2) Recommends the annual medical staff budget to the Medical Executive Committee;

(3) Recommends the amount of annual dues and, if appropriate, assessments to the Medical Executive Committee;

(4) Meets at the call of the chair but no less frequently than monthly,

(5) Fulfills other responsibilities as established in these bylaws or as are appropriately delegated by the Medical Executive Committee or the medical staff.

3. Bylaws Committee

a) Composition

The bylaws committee consists of [two] members of the medical staff and the medical staff secretary [secretary-treasurer] who will serve as committee chair.

b) Duties

The bylaws committee:

(1) Reviews medical staff bylaws, rules and regulations and policies on an annual basis and propose amendments as appropriate to the Medical Executive Committee; 74

(2) Reviews hospital bylaws and related policies on an annual basis and alert the Medical Executive Committee of conflicts with medical staff bylaws, rules and regulations and policies; 75

(3) Reviews medical staff application forms and other forms for consistency with the medical staff bylaws, rules and regulations and policies, and proposes amendments as appropriate to the Medical Executive Committee;

74 Georgia Regulation 290-9-7-.11(c) states, “The medical staff of the hospital shall adopt and enforce bylaws and rules and regulations which provide for the self-governance of medical staff activities and accountability to the governing body for the quality of care provided to all patients. The bylaws and rules and regulations shall become effective when approved by the governing body and shall include at a minimum: …15. A procedure for review and/or update of the bylaws and rules and regulations as necessary, but at least once every three (3) years.”

75 AMA policy states, “The AMA encourages hospital medical executive committees to: (1) regularly examine the hospital/corporate bylaws, rules and regulations for any conflicts with the medical staff bylaws, rules and regulations or practices; (2) request that their hospital board of trustees/directors notify them of any proposed or impending changes in the hospital/corporate bylaws; and (3) advise members/applicants of the medical staff of the effect of these hospital/corporate bylaws, rules and regulations.” AMA Policy Compendium H-225.984. Under pending JC Standard MS.01.01.01 Element of Performance 4,” the medical staff bylaws, rules and regulations, and policies, the governing body bylaws, and the hospital policies are compatible with each other and are compliant with law and regulation.”
(4) Oversees compliance with the medical staff bylaws, rules and regulations, and policies;

(5) Fulfills other responsibilities as established in these bylaws or as are appropriately delegated by the Medical Executive Committee or the medical staff.

4. **Cancer committee**

   a) **Composition**

   The cancer committee consists of at least six board-certified physicians, one each from these specialties: general surgery, medical oncology, radiation oncology, diagnostic radiology, pathology, and the cancer liaison physician, and including at least one physician representing each of the diagnostic and treatment services. A physician member may represent both a site and a specialty. The cancer committee chair is a physician who may also fulfill the role of one of the required physician specialties. The cancer committee shall also include an individual from each of the following areas of the hospital: cancer program administration, oncology nursing, social services, certified tumor registrar to carry out case abstracting, and quality improvement professional. Additional physician or non-physician members include at a minimum representatives of hospice/home care nursing or administration; pain control/palliative care specialist, clinical research data manager or nurse; and may include a nutrition specialist, pharmacists, mental health professional or psychiatrist, pastoral care representative, American Cancer Society cancer control representative, and a public member of the community served. Other physician and non-physician members may also be on the committee as needed. All non-medical staff members will be eligible to vote, except on matters relating exclusively to the medical staff.

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76 Implementing Georgia Regulations 290-9-7-.11(b)2,” The medical staff shall implement measures, including peer review, to monitor the on-going performance of the delivery of patient care by those granted clinical privileges, including monitoring of compliance with the medical staff bylaws, rules and regulations…” Under pending JC standard MS.01.01.01, Element of Performance 6, “the organized medical staff enforces the medical staff bylaws, rules and regulations, and policies…”

77 This section is designed to help the medical staff and hospital meet the standards of the American College of Surgeons Commission on Cancer. Cancer Program Standard 2.1, “Level of responsibility and Accountability,” calls for a cancer committee, which can either be designated in hospital bylaws, medical staff bylaws or hospital policies and procedures, but if in bylaws, calls for a standing committee.

78 Called for by American College of Surgeons Commission on Cancer, Cancer Program Standard 2.2.

79 Specified under the definitions and requirements under American College of Surgeons Commission on Cancer, Cancer Program Standard 2.2.

80 Specified under the definitions and requirements under American College of Surgeons Commission on Cancer, Cancer Program Standard 2.2.

81 Called for by American College of Surgeons Commission on Cancer, Cancer Program Standard 2.2.

82 Additional required cancer committee members may be required for certain categories of cancer programs. See the American College of Surgeons Commission on Cancer, Cancer Program Standards 2.4.
1 b) Duties

The cancer committee:

(1) develops and evaluates annual goals and objectives for clinical, community outreach, quality improvement, and programmatic endeavors related to cancer care.

(2) Is accountable, through the Medical Executive Committee, to the board, for all clinical cancer activities at the hospital.\(^\text{83}\)

(3) reviews and makes recommendations on all policies and procedures related to care of cancer patients.

(4) Works towards complete compliance with all standards required to maintain accreditation by the American College of Surgeons Commission on Cancer.

(5) establish, as appropriate, subcommittees or workgroups to fulfill cancer program goals.

(6) monitors cancer-related quality management and improvement through completion of quality management studies that focus on quality, access to care, and outcomes.

(7) promotes clinical research.

(8) supervises the cancer registry and encouraging accurate and timely abstracting, staging, and follow up reporting.\(^\text{84}\)

(9) performs quality control for registry data.

(10) encourages data usage and regular reporting.

(11) designates one coordinator for each of the four areas of cancer committee activity cancer conference, quality control of cancer registry data, quality improvement and community outreach. The cancer liaison physician must fulfill the role of community outreach coordinator.\(^\text{85}\)

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\(^\text{83}\) American College of Surgeons Commission on Cancer, Cancer Program Standard 2.1 states, “The organizational structure of the facility or medical staff gives the cancer committee responsibility and accountability for the cancer program activities.”

\(^\text{84}\) Georgia hospitals are required to report certain information on patients receiving hospital services to the Georgia Comprehensive Cancer Registry pursuant to Georgia State Code 31-12-2(a).

\(^\text{85}\) Called for by American College of Surgeons Commission on Cancer, Cancer Program Standard 2.3.
(12) develops and evaluates the annual goals and objectives for the clinical, community outreach, quality improvement, and programmatic endeavors related to cancer care.86

(13) establishes cancer conference frequency, format and multidisciplinary attendance requirements for cancer conferences on an annual basis and monitoring attendance and compliance.87

(14) ensures the required numbers of cases are discussed at cancer conference and that at least 75 percent of the cases discussed are prospective.88

(15) establishes and implements a plan to evaluate the quality of cancer registry data and activity on an annual basis.89

(16) completes annually at least one site-specific analysis that includes comparison and outcome data and disseminates the results of the analysis to the medical staff.90

(17) reviews 10% of the analytic caseload to ensure that 90% of cancer pathology reports include scientifically validated date elements.91

(18) analyzes patient outcomes and disseminating the results of the analysis annually.

(19) reviews 10% of the analytic caseload to ensure that AJCC staging is assigned by the managing physician and recorded on a staging form in the medical record on at least 90% of the eligible analytic cases.92

(20) provides a formal mechanism for educating patients about cancer-related clinical trials and offering at least one cancer-related educational activity each year.93

(21) reviews the percentage of cases accrued to cancer-related clinical trials each year.

(22) monitors community outreach activities on an annual basis.

(23) completes and documents annually the required studies that measure quality and outcomes.94

86 Based on American College of Surgeons Commission on Cancer, Cancer Program Standard 2.5.
87 Based on American College of Surgeons Commission on Cancer, Cancer Program Standard 2.6 and 2.7.
88 Based on American College of Surgeons Commission on Cancer, Cancer Program Standard 2.8.
89 Based on American College of Surgeons Commission on Cancer, Cancer Program Standard 2.10.
90 Based on American College of Surgeons Commission on Cancer, Cancer Program Standard 2.11.
91 To meet American College of Surgeons Commission on Cancer, Cancer Program Standard 3.3.
92 To meet American College of Surgeons Commission on Cancer, Cancer Program Standard 3.4 and 3.5.
93 To meet American College of Surgeons Commission on Cancer, Cancer Program Standard 5.1 and 7.1.
meet at the call of the chair but at least every other month.\textsuperscript{95}

fulfills other responsibilities as established in these bylaws or as are appropriately delegated by the Medical Executive Committee or the medical staff.

5. Credentials Committee

a) Composition.

The credentials committee shall be composed of [five] members representing different specialties.

b) Duties.

The credentials committee:

1. reviews [section and] department recommendations and evaluates the information supporting all medical staff membership and clinical privileges applications, and makes recommendations regarding membership, staff category, privileges, restrictions and changes in privileges to the Medical Executive Committee.

2. reviews [section and] department recommendations and evaluates the information supporting all applications for renewed membership and all available information and makes recommendations to the MEC concerning membership renewals and clinical privileges for the ensuing membership period.

3. periodically reviews the forms, procedures and policies involved in the credentialing process and recommends changes to the Medical Executive Committee.

In carrying out these duties, credentials committee members shall comply with the conflict of interest requirements of these bylaws.

6. Infection Control Committee\textsuperscript{96}

a) Composition

The infection control committee shall consist of at least one representative of the departments of medicine, surgery, obstetrics-gynecology, pediatrics,

\textsuperscript{94} American College of Surgeons Commission on Cancer, Cancer Program Standard 8.1.

\textsuperscript{95} Suggested by the definition and requirements for American College of Surgeons Commission on Cancer, Cancer Program Standard 2.4.

\textsuperscript{96} AMA policy states that: “(1) the hospital medical staff should have a multidisciplinary committee to oversee the surveillance, prevention and control of infection; (2) the infection control committee should report to the hospital medical staff executive committee; and (3) the medical staff's role, responsibility and authority in the infection control activities should be included in the medical staff bylaws.” AMA Policy Compendium H-235.969.
anesthesiology, infectious diseases, pathology, the infection control officer, and the lead nurse for infection control.

b) Duties
The infection control committee:

(1) recommends to the Medical Executive Committee preventive programs designed to minimize infection;

(2) oversees infection control throughout the hospital including without limitation operating rooms, delivery rooms, recovery rooms and special care units; sterilization procedures; isolation procedures; provider testing; and procurement, storage, and transfusion procedures of blood or blood products;

(3) meets at the call of the chair but no less frequently than monthly;

(4) fulfills other responsibilities as established in these bylaws or as are appropriately delegated by the Medical Executive Committee or the medical staff.

7. Joint Conference Committee

a) Composition
The joint conference committee consists of the medical staff officers and hospital board members in equal number, selected by the board chair from its members. The chair will alternate at each meeting between board and medical staff representatives.

b) Duties
The committee serves as the primary locus for management and resolution of disputes between medical staff and board, and may accept requests to resolve differences between or among other medical staff and/or hospital leaders. Disputes shall be managed, and where possible resolved by consensus, after sufficient opportunity for the committee to receive and review any documentation or other appropriate input, including meeting and working with any involved parties. The joint conference committee reviews all hospital

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97 Under Medicare COP 42 C.F.R. §482.42(a) “A person or persons must be designated as infection control officer or officers to develop and implement policies governing control of infections and communicable diseases.” A member of the committee can be designated infection control officer if needed.

98 The Committee provides a forum for conflict resolution as called for under Joint Commission Standard LD.02.04.01

99 AMA Principle for Strengthening the Physician-Hospital Relationship #12 states, “Areas of dispute and concern, arising between the organized medical staff and the hospital governing body, are addressed by well-defined processes in which the organized medical staff and hospital governing body are equally represented. These processes are determined by agreement between the organized medical staff and the hospital governing body.” AMA Policy Compendium H-225.957

100 Joint Commission Standards LD 02.04.01, Element of Performance 1 states, “Senior managers and leaders of the organized medical staff work with the governing body to develop an ongoing process for managing conflict among leadership groups.”

101 JC standard LD 02.04.01 Element of Performance 4 provides:
strategic plans prior to implementation. The joint conference committee may request any additional information from the medical staff or administration before acting to approve or disapprove such plan.

8. **Medical Executive Committee**

[The medical staff as a whole serves as the executive committee.]

a) **Composition**

The Medical Executive Committee consists of the medical staff officers, the elected department chairs or in any departments under exclusive contract, the elected representative of the department, the AMA OMSS Representative, and [4] at-large members representatives. The president will chair the committee. The administrator may be invited by the president to attend the Medical Executive Committee meetings as needed and appropriate.

b) **Duties**

The Medical Executive Committee:

- reviews the recommendations of the medical staff departments and committees regarding the clinical competence of applicants and medical staff members and other practitioners with or applying for clinical privileges and make recommendations to the

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"The conflict management process includes the following:
- Meeting with the involved parties as early as possible to identify the conflict
- Gathering information regarding the conflict
- Working with the parties to manage and, when possible, resolve the conflict
- Protecting the safety and quality of care."

102 AMA Principle for Strengthening the Physician-Hospital Relationship #3 states, “The leaders of the organized medical staff...are involved in hospital strategic planning as described in the medical staff bylaws.” AMA Policy Compendium H-225.957

103 Pending JC standard MS.01.01.01, Element of Performance 20 states, “the medical staff bylaws must also include...the medical executive committee’s function, size, and composition...”

104 As noted in footnote 4 of the JC Accreditation Manual for Healthcare Organizations Medical Staff Chapter, “the medical staff as a whole may serve as the executive committee. In smaller, less complex hospitals where the entire medical staff functions as the executive committee, it is often designated as a committee of the whole.”

105 To permit the department rather than the hospital to name the department’s representative to the medical executive committee.

106 Including the AMA OMSS representative will promote communication between the medical staff and AMA.

107 Allowing at large representatives may assist the medical staff to comply with JC Standard MS.02.01.01 EP 3, which provides that “all members of the organized medical staff, of any discipline or specialty, are eligible for membership on the executive committee.”

108 JC standard MS.02.01.01, Element of Performance 2 states, “The chief executive officer (CEO) of the hospital or his or her designee attends each medical staff executive committee meeting on an ex-officio basis, with or without a vote."
board regarding membership, membership renewal,\textsuperscript{109} staff categorization, and department assignments, and renewal, termination or changes in clinical privileges;\textsuperscript{110}

(2) is authorized to act for the organized medical staff between meetings of the organized medical staff,\textsuperscript{111} with the exception of election of officers and amendment of these bylaws,\textsuperscript{112} and subject to any other limitations imposed by the medical staff bylaws, which authority can be further limited or removed by vote of two-thirds of the medical staff eligible to vote.\textsuperscript{113} The Medical Executive Committee represents and is accountable to the medical staff, and, except for recommendations regarding membership, privileges and corrective actions, subject to reversal of its decisions by a majority vote of the active staff;\textsuperscript{114}

(3) oversees and coordinates the activities of medical staff departments and committees including resolving conflicts among them or among members\textsuperscript{115};

(4) receives and, when requested or appropriate, acts upon committee and departmental minutes, reports and recommendations;\textsuperscript{116}

(5) adopts and implements policies of the medical staff;

\textsuperscript{109} According to JC standard MS.02.01.01, Elements of Performance 6, “the medical staff executive committee makes recommendations, as defined in the medical staff bylaws, directly to the governing body on at least… medical staff membership.”

\textsuperscript{110} Consistent with JC standard MS.02.01.01, Elements of Performance 11, “the medical staff executive committee makes recommendations, as defined in the medical staff bylaws, directly to the governing body on at least…the delineation of privileges for each practitioner privileges through the medical staff process (and) medical staff membership.”

\textsuperscript{111} Pending JC standard MS.01.01.01 Element of Performance 23 states, “the medical staff bylaws must also include the following: that the medical executive committee acts on behalf of the medical staff between meetings of the organized medical staff, within the scope of its responsibilities as defined by the organized medical staff.”

\textsuperscript{112} Under pending Joint Commission standard MS 01.01.01, Element of Performance 20, the medical staff bylaws must include “the authority delegated to the medical executive committee by the organized medical staff to act on the medical staff’s behalf.”

\textsuperscript{113} Under pending Joint Commission standard MS 01.01.01, Element of Performance 20, the medical staff bylaws must include how the authority delegated to the medical executive committee by the organized medical staff to act on the medical staff’s behalf is removed. Pending Joint Commission standard MS 01.01.01, Element of Performance 2 states, “The organized medical staff adopts and amends medical staff bylaws. Adoption or amendment of medical staff bylaws cannot be delegated. “

\textsuperscript{114} Under pending Joint Commission standard MS 01.01.01, Element of Performance 10, “The organized medical staff has a process which is implemented to manage conflict between the medical staff and the medical executive committee on issues including, but not limited to, proposals to adopt a rule, regulation, or policy or an amendment thereto.”

\textsuperscript{115} The hospital manages conflict between leadership groups to protect the quality and safety of care.” JC standard LD .02.04.01.

\textsuperscript{116} According to JC standard MS.02.01.01, Elements of Performance 12, “the medical staff executive committee makes recommendations, as defined in the medical staff bylaws, directly to the governing body on…the executive committee reviews and acts on reports of medical staff committees, departments, and other assigned activity groups.”
(6) is kept informed of any hospital activities, business developments and projects, pending decisions, policies, plans or proposals related to patient care at the earliest possible juncture and in all cases in advance of their implementation, by hospital administration or board members, to permit the Medical Executive Committee to provide clinical input and recommendations to the board.\(^{117}\)

(7) recommends action to the Board of Directors as appropriate on matters of a medical administrative nature including the medical staff structure;\(^ {118} \)

(8) develops organ and tissue donation protocols for the medical staff, or adopts those developed by a committee, department or task force appointed by the president for this purpose;\(^ {119} \)

(9) recommends to the Board of Directors or a committee thereof, all matters relating to membership determinations, staff categorization, department assignments and corrective action, except when such is a function of the medical staff;

(10) reports at each general staff meeting;

(11) oversees the medical staff accounts and, when appropriate, votes to disperse funds for medical staff activities, including for services rendered to the medical staff by legal counsel and by other independent professional assistance retained by the Medical Executive Committee to protect and promote the interests of the medical staff;\(^ {120} \)

(12) discharges such other duties as may be assigned to it by the medical staff;

(13) meets at the call of the chair but at least monthly; and

(14) fulfills other responsibilities as established in these bylaws or as are appropriately delegated by the Medical Executive Committee or the medical staff.

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\(^{117}\) Under Georgia Regulations 290-9-7-.11, the bylaws must include “a mechanism for participation of medical staff in policy decisions related to patient care in all areas of the hospital.”

\(^{118}\) JC standard MS.02.01.01, Elements of Performance 9 states that “the medical staff executive committee makes recommendations, as defined in the medical staff bylaws, directly to the governing body on at least…the organized medical staff’s structure.”

\(^{119}\) Implementing MAG Policy # 370.997, “MAG will work with the Georgia Hospital Association in urging hospitals to allow medical staffs to be given the primary role in the development of organ donation protocols and other related functions,” consistent with JC standard TS.01.01.01 \(,\) “Leaders implement policies and procedures developed with the medical staff’s participation for procuring and donating organs and other tissues.”

\(^{120}\) Consistent with AMA policy, which states that “Organized medical staffs have a right to independent legal counsel. Our AMA strongly recommends that hospital medical staffs retain their own attorneys so that the medical staff will have access to its own legal advocates for guidance and to ensure the integrity, both legally and organizationally, of the self-governing medical staff. ….” AMA Policy Compendium H-235.992
9. Medical Staff Wellness Committee

a) Composition

The medical staff wellness committee consists of no fewer than three active medical staff members, a majority of which, including the chair, shall be physicians, where possible, with experience in psychiatry and addiction medicine. Except for initial appointments, each member shall serve a term of 3 years, and the terms shall be staggered to achieve continuity. Members of this committee shall not serve on peer review committees or in department or Medical Executive Committee leadership while serving on this committee.

b) Duties

The medical staff wellness committee:

1. receives reports and self-referrals related to the physical, mental and emotional health and well-being of medical staff members, to improve patient care by assisting those members who might be impaired.
2. determines whether reports are reliable, and take in additional data and make recommendations regarding such reports.
3. refers the member to appropriate sources of treatment and assistance.
4. provides advice, counseling, or monitoring, or coordinate services with outside treatment and assistance sources;
5. maintains all committee information, including as appropriate informants’ identity, as confidential with the exception of a member whose condition or non-compliance presents unreasonable risk of harm to patients, in which case the committee shall refer the member for corrective action;

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121 JC standard MS.11.01.01 calls on the medical staff to implement a health management process for licensed independent practitioners. A medical staff committee with a responsibility to promote quality care may qualify for protection under Georgia peer review laws.
122 Under JC Standard MS.11.01.01, “The identification process is separate from actions taken for disciplinary function.”
123 Element of Performance 2 for JC Standard MS.11.01.01 states that the process design should address self-referral by physicians and licensed independent professionals.
124 Element of Performance 6 for JC Standard MS.11.01.01, states that process design should address “evaluation of the credibility of a complaint, allegation, or concern.”
125 Element of Performance 4 for JC Standard MS.11.01.01 calls for addressing referral of the affected practitioners “to the appropriate professional internal or external resources for diagnosis and treatment of the condition or concern.”
126 Joint Commission standard MS 11.01.01, Element of Performance 4, states, “process design addresses the following issues: Referral by others and maintaining informant confidentiality.”
127 JC standard MS 11.01.01, Element of Performance 9 calls for appropriate action to be initiated when a licensed independent practitioner fails to complete a required rehabilitation program.
128 Element of Performance 4 for JC Standard MS.11.01.01 states that the wellness process should address “maintenance of the confidentiality of the Licensed Independent Practitioners seeking referral or referred
(6) develops educational programs to instruct medical staff to recognize behavioral problems, illness and impairment in healthcare professionals;129

(7) reports to the Medical Executive Committee on the activities of the committee without violating confidentiality of the members involved;

(8) fulfills other responsibilities as established in these bylaws or as are appropriately delegated by the Medical Executive Committee or the medical staff; and

(9) meets at the call of the chair, but at least quarterly.

10. **Peer Review Committee**130

a) **Composition**

b) The peer review committee consists of [2] surgeons and [2] family physicians or internists.131 Under no circumstances is peer review committee membership limited to members who are employed by or under contract with or otherwise practice exclusively at the hospital.132

c) **Duties**133

The peer review committee:

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129 Element of Performance 1 for JC Standard MS.11.01.01 states that the process design should address education of the medical staff and other organization staff “about illness and impairment recognition issues specific to Licensed Independent Practitioners.”

130 For non-departmentalized medical staffs, a peer review committee may be a useful structure for conducting review. Medical review committees such as this are protected under Georgia state immunity and confidentiality statutes, specifically, Georgia Code sections 31-7-130, 31-7-132 (a), 31-7-133 (a); 31-7-141, and (a); 31-7-143, enforced in numerous cases before Georgia courts such as *Baldwin County Hosp. Authority v. Wright*, 202 Ga. App. 9 (413 S.E.2d 484) (1991). The confidentiality protections are described by the court in *Emory Clinic v. Houston*, 258 Ga. 434, 434-435 (1) (369 S.E.2d 913) (1988), as “an absolute embargo upon the discovery and use of all proceedings, records, findings and recommendations of peer review groups and medical review committees in civil litigation.” Providing confidentiality is intended “to foster the delivery of quality medical services by preserving the candor necessary for the effective functioning of hospital medical review committees...” according to the decision in *Hollowell v. Jove*, 247 Ga. 678, 680 (279 S.E.2d 430) (1981).

131 Peer review committee membership should at least balance proceduralists and non-proceduralists, or provide representation of individual specialties.

132 Based on “Principles for Incident-Based Peer Review and Disciplining at Health Care Organizations”, AMA Policy Compendium D-375.992.

133 To meet Georgia Regulation 290-9-7-.11 (b)2 requirement that “(t)he medical staff shall implement measures, including peer review, to monitor the on-going performance of the delivery of patient care by those granted clinical privileges, including monitoring of compliance with the medical staff bylaws, rules and regulations, and hospital policies and procedures.”
(1) initiates review based on information referred by the performance improvement process, or by the Medical Executive Committee. Sources for identifying cases for peer review include, but are not limited to, chart reviews, quality indicators, data from medical staff committees, patient or family complaints, and event trending reports. All review will be conducted according to the medical staff peer review policy.134

(2) requests the Medical Executive Committee to refer a matter for external peer review when warranted, consistent with these bylaws.

(3) routinely recommends updates and other improvements in the medical staff peer review policy for adoption by the Medical Executive Committee.

(4) meets at the call of the chair but at least quarterly;

(5) fulfills other responsibilities as established in these bylaws or as are appropriately delegated by the Medical Executive Committee or the medical staff.

11. The Pharmacy & Therapeutics Committee 135

a) Composition
The pharmacy & therapeutics committee consists of a physician from each department, a pharmacist from the hospital pharmacy and a representative from nursing. The chair shall appoint appropriate physician members of the pharmacy & therapeutics committee and hospital personnel to serve on a nutrition subcommittee.

b) Duties
The pharmacy & therapeutics committee:

(1) develops drug utilization policies; policies regarding drug inventory and floor stock; and the hospital formulary;

(2) assesses the technical quality of diagnosis and therapeutic services performed at the hospital;

(3) review adverse drug reaction reports, clinical antibiotic usages and other drug usage practices;

(4) recommends medical equipment needs;

134 Georgia regulations 290-9-7-.11(b)2 requires that “(t)he medical staff shall implement measures, including peer review, to monitor the on-going performance of the delivery of patient care by those granted clinical privileges...” Policy governing peer review processes can be continuously tailored and updated to continuously improve quality.

135 Implementing Georgia Regulations 290-9-7-.11(c) which states, “The bylaws and rules and regulations shall become effective when approved by the governing body and shall include at a minimum: …11. Establishment of procedures for the choice and control of all drugs in the hospital...”
(5) oversees the activities of the nutrition subcommittee, which:

(a) on request, evaluates patients to provide for appropriate feeding;
(b) develops procedures for monitoring enteral and TPN feeding;
(c) makes recommendations on nutritionally high-risk patients upon admission;
(d) provides updates on nutrition information to the medical staff;
(e) makes recommendations on outpatient nutritional programs;
(f) provides coordination of nutritional services in the hospital and home care setting;

(6) meets at the call of the chair but no less frequently than quarterly,

(7) fulfills other responsibilities as established in these bylaws or as are appropriately delegated by the Medical Executive Committee or the medical staff.

12. Quality Improvement Committee

a) Composition

The committee consists of representatives of each medical staff department [and section] and shall be chaired by the president-elect.

b) Duties

The quality improvement committee:

(1) maintains and implements the written hospital-wide quality improvement plan, recommending updates and improvements, as needed, to the Medical Executive Committee;
(2) prioritizes and monitors the results of quality improvement activities throughout the hospital;
(3) develops and maintains systems for monitoring the quality of hospital services ordered by medical staff members;¹³⁶
(4) develops and implements continuing medical education activities based on quality improvement data specific to this medical staff.¹³⁷

¹³⁶Implementing Georgia Regulation 290-9-7-.11 (b)3, which states,” (t)he medical staff shall establish effective systems of accountability for any hospital services ordered by physicians and other practitioners.”
¹³⁷Implementing MAG Policy # 300.995:”MAG believes that each institution's medical staff should decide the types of CME activities that are appropriate for itself.”
(5) meets at the call of the chair but no less frequently than monthly,

(6) fulfills other responsibilities as established in these bylaws or as are appropriately delegated by the Medical Executive Committee or the medical staff.

13. Utilization Review Committee

a) Composition

The utilization review committee consists of physician representatives of each medical staff department [and section] and shall be chaired by the Secretary [Secretary-Treasurer.]

b) Duties

The utilization review committee:

(1) maintains and implements the hospital-wide utilization review plan which shall be designed solely to promote quality care by promoting appropriate utilization of hospital resources through reducing under-utilization and over-utilization of services, recommending updates and improvements, as needed, to the Medical Executive Committee;

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138 Medicare COP 42 C.F.R. §482.30(b) states, “Composition of utilization review committee. A UR committee consisting of two or more practitioners must carry out the UR function. At least two of the members of the committee must be doctors of medicine or osteopathy. The other members may be any of the other types of practitioners specified in §482.12(c)(1).

(1) Except as specified in paragraphs (b)(2) and (3) of this section, the UR committee must be one of the following:

(i) A staff committee of the institution;

(ii) A group outside the institution—

(A) Established by the local medical society and some or all of the hospitals in the locality; or

(B) Established in a manner approved by CMS.

(2) If, because of the small size of the institution, it is impracticable to have a properly functioning staff committee, the UR committee must be established as specified in paragraph (b)(1)(ii) of this section.”

139 Medicare Conditions of Participation require the Utilization Review Committee to consist of at least two doctors of medicine or osteopathy, under §482.30, “Condition of participation: Utilization review.” The composition proposed here would meet the Medicare Condition of Participation and provide for diversity of professional specialties to structure and carry out utilization review.

140 Consistent with MAG Policy #180.998, which states “MAG supports the concept that every hospital medical staff should have a viable, active and effective utilization review mechanism, recognizing that specific needs will vary from place to place, and that in some instances, combined or joint efforts by smaller facilities may be necessary in order to provide utilization review of an acceptable quality. MAG agrees strongly that true utilization review by physicians should be done only to determine the appropriateness and quality of care rendered. It should never be performed as fiscal review. MAG does not believe that physicians performing medical services should be required to perform utilization review simply to aid a facility insurer or other third party to reduce their operating costs.

141 Consistent with AMA Council on Ethical and Judicial Affairs Opinion E-4.04, which states, “(t)he primary obligation of the hospital medical staff is to safeguard the quality of care provided within the institution. The medical staff has the responsibility to perform essential functions on behalf of the hospital
consistent with the utilization plan, reviews hospital admissions with
respect to medical necessity of services and duration of hospital stay;

(3) meets at the call of the chair but no less frequently than monthly;

(4) fulfills other responsibilities as established in these bylaws or as are
appropriately delegated by the Medical Executive Committee or the medical
staff.

D. Meetings

Meetings of the medical staff are open to all medical staff members, regardless of
category or voting rights. Department [section] and committee meetings may be limited,
in whole or in part, to members only, by the chair for discussion of privileged and/or
confidential information regarding quality improvement or peer review information or
unless and until executive session is called.

1. Attendance Obligation

a) Meeting attendance

Except as stated below, each member of the [active] [medical] staff shall be required to attend:

(1) The annual medical staff meeting;

(2) At least [50%] percent of all other general staff meetings duly convened
pursuant to these bylaws; and

(3) At least [50%] percent of all meetings of each department, division, and
committee to which the member is assigned.

Any member who is compelled to be absent from any medical staff, department, division,
or committee meeting shall promptly provide to the regular presiding officer thereof the
reason for such absence. Unless excused for good cause by the presiding officer of the
department [.section] or committee, or the secretary [secretary-treasurer] for medical staff
meetings, failure to meet the attendance requirements may be grounds for removal from
such committee or for non-renewal of medical staff membership.

in accordance with licensing laws and accreditation requirements. Treatment or hospitalization that is
willfully excessive or inadequate constitutes unethical practice. The organized medical staff has an
obligation to avoid wasteful practices and unnecessary treatment that may cause the hospital needless
expense. In a situation where the economic interests of the hospital are in conflict with patient welfare,
patient welfare takes priority.” Georgia Code section 31-7-7 authorizes hospitals to act on medical staff
applications for clinical privileges based on “the applicant's demonstrated training, experience, competence,
and availability and reasonable objectives, including, but not limited to, the appropriate utilization of
hospital facilities.”
b) Special Attendance

A practitioner whose case or care is scheduled for discussion at a department, section or committee meeting shall be provided special notice of the requirement to respond in the manner determined by the department, section or committee. Failure by the practitioner to attend such a meeting shall result in an automatic suspension of the practitioner’s privileges that shall remain in effect until the matter is resolved through any mechanism that may be appropriate, including corrective action, if necessary, unless the President, the Chair of the applicable committee or department or the Executive Committee determines subsequently that there was good cause for the failure to attend and terminates the automatic suspension.

2. Special Meeting

A special meeting of the medical staff may be called by the president or the Medical Executive Committee or shall be called by the president upon petition signed by not less than [one-fourth] of the active medical staff members within thirty days after the petition is received. The Executive Committee shall designate the time and place of any such special meeting in the written notice delivered not less than seven nor more than fifteen days before the date of such meeting. No business shall be transacted at any special meeting except that stated in the notice calling the meeting.

3. Notice

Unless otherwise provided in these bylaws, notice of meetings may be established by resolution of the meeting or by pronouncement of the chair at the previous meeting. Presence at a meeting establishes receipt of notice. Notice of general and special meetings of the medical staff shall be provided to all medical staff members, regardless of voting status.  

4. Quorum

At any meeting of the medical staff, the presence of [one-half of] the total membership of the active medical staff at any regular or special meeting shall constitute a quorum for the purposes of amendment to these bylaws and the rules and regulations. The presence of twenty-five percent of the active medical staff shall constitute a quorum for all other actions. Except as otherwise specified, the action of a majority of the members present and voting at a meeting at which a quorum is present shall be the action of the group. A meeting at which a quorum is initially present may continue to transact business notwithstanding the withdrawal of members, if any action taken is approved by at least a majority of the required quorum for such meeting, or such greater number as may be specifically required by these bylaws.

5. Electronic Participation

Attendance, meeting of a committee, department, section, or the medical staff organization, actions including voting, notice other than special notice, and participation

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142 To encourage involvement and participation by all medical staff members.
may be accomplished by email or other electronic and/or telephonic means where permitted by the chair of the meeting on either an individual or group basis.

6. **Agenda**

The agenda and order of business at all meetings of the medical staff shall be determined by the president, subject to the approval of the Medical Executive Committee, and consistent with the following:

a) The medical staff meeting agenda shall include acceptance of the minutes of the last regular and all special meetings held since the last regular meeting, old business, new business; reports by responsible officers, committees and departments, and election of officers when required by these bylaws.

b) At any general medical staff meeting or any special medical staff meeting called for that purpose, actions of the Medical Executive Committee, other than recommendations regarding membership, privileges and corrective actions, may, at the request of any active member, be reviewed by the medical staff and revised by a majority of those voting.

c) The agenda of all other meetings shall be determined by the presiding officer of the meeting.

7. **Executive Session**

The medical staff, its committees and departments [sections] are entitled to meet in executive session, limited to voting members, administrative personnel needed to keep the record, and those expressly invited by the presiding officer. Executive session may be called by the presiding officer at the request of any member, and shall be called by the presiding officer pursuant to a duly adopted motion. Actions can be taken in executive session, and have the same force and effect of actions taken in open meetings.

8. **Parliamentary Code**

Unless otherwise specified, meetings shall be conducted according to Robert's Rule of Order [Sturgis Standard Code of Parliamentary Procedure]; however, technical or not-substantive departures from parliamentary codes shall not invalidate action taken at such a meeting.

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143 Peer review actions should not be the subjects of popular vote.
144 Avoids the pro-forma subjecting all decisions to the whole medical staff but allows any active member to call for review by the entire staff of any MEC decision other than peer review related matters.
145 "The AMA (1) supports the right of any hospital medical staff committee to meet in executive session, with only voting members of the medical staff present, in order to permit open and free discussion of issues such as peer review and to maintain confidentiality; and (2) encourages individual medical staffs to incorporate provisions in their bylaws to affirm this right.” AMA Policy Compendium H-235.987
E. Medical Staff Organization Support

1. Meeting Support
Hospital administration shall arrange for attendance of hospital administrative staff to attend, in a non-voting capacity, at the request of the chair of the committee, department [section] or medical staff meeting, to maintain the record of the meeting and otherwise provide support.

2. Medical Staff Office
The hospital shall provide the medical staff with appropriate office space, equipment, and support staff necessary to carry out the managerial, secretarial and support work required by the medical staff officers, departments, [sections] and committees. Confidentiality of medical staff records\textsuperscript{146} will be maintained by the medical staff office.

a) Medical Staff Manager/Coordinator
The hospital will hire administrative personnel to conduct verification of credentials, maintain medical staff records, provide meeting management and facilitate other functions needed for the medical staff organization to carry out its responsibilities as detailed in these bylaws. Medical staff support staff shall be adequately trained and certified in medical staff management\textsuperscript{147}

\textsuperscript{146} The medical staff office is typically the repository for medical staff information that Georgia statutes and caselaw protect from discovery in malpractice cases brought against physicians. Medical staff office personnel would not be permitted to reveal confidential peer review information under Georgia Code section 31-7-143, which states that “no person who was in attendance at a meeting of such committee shall be permitted or required to testify in any such civil action as to any evidence or other matters produced or presented during the proceedings of such committee or as to any findings, recommendations, evaluations, opinions, or other actions of such committee or any members thereof.” Georgia courts include in “records and proceedings” records pertaining to the care of the patient at issue in the case for which peer review information is being sought. \textit{Hollowell v. Jove}. The statute continues, “however, information, documents, or records otherwise available from original sources shall not be construed as immune from discovery or use in any such civil action merely because they were presented during proceedings of such committee; nor shall any person who testifies before such committee or who is a member of such committee be prevented from testifying as to matters within his knowledge, provided that such witness may not be questioned regarding his testimony before such a committee or opinions formed by him as a result of such committee hearings.” Further, the Georgia Supreme Court has held in \textit{Hospital Authority Of Valdosta And Lowndes County, D/B/A South Georgia Medical Center V. Meeks} that “Unless the credentialing information involves the evaluation of the quality and efficiency of actual medical services, it does not come within the peer review and medical review privileges of OCGA §§ 31-7-133 (a) and 31-7-143.” Because exceptions to confidentiality protections can be technical, and the ramifications of revealing confidential peer review information are significant, medical staffs should develop clear protocols for the release of information, including as appropriate access to medical staff counsel to assist in decision-making.

\textsuperscript{147} Certification is available from the National Association Medical Staff Services at www.namss.org.
b) Medical Director [Vice President Of Medical Affairs]\(^{148}\)

If a medical director [vice president of medical affairs] is hired by the hospital, the following provisions shall apply.\(^{149}\)

(1) Qualifications

The medical director [vice president of medical affairs] shall be a physician with demonstrated administrative ability. The medical director [vice president of medical affairs] shall be a member of the medical staff with clinical privileges if he/she will be providing any clinical services at the hospital in addition to serving as the medical director [vice president of medical affairs].

(2) Selection

The administrator shall coordinate any recruiting and hiring efforts involving the position of medical director with the Medical Executive Committee. The Medical Executive Committee or a subcommittee thereof designated by the Medical Executive Committee shall interview the candidates qualified for the position. The hospital’s decision shall be consistent with the recommendations of the Medical Executive Committee.\(^ {150}\)

(3) Term of Office

The medical director [vice president of medical affairs] may resign at any time by notifying the administrator in writing. Such resignation, which may or may not be contingent on formal acceptances, shall take effect on the date of receipt or at any later time specified in the notice of resignation. The medical director [vice president of medical affairs] shall not be removed without cause. The medical director [vice president of medical affairs] shall be removed upon the reasonable request of the Medical Executive Committee indicating the cause for the request. Such removal shall not of itself constitute a diminution of the staff membership, if any, of the medical director [vice president of medical affairs] or otherwise.

\(^{148}\) “Our AMA supports the following guidelines regarding the role of the hospital medical director: (1) The hospital governing body, management, and medical staff should jointly determine if there is a need to employ a medical director; establish the purpose, duties, and responsibilities of this position; establish the qualifications for this position; and provide a mechanism for medical staff input into the selection, evaluation, and termination of the hospital medical director. (2) The purpose, duties, and responsibilities of the medical director should be included in the medical staff and hospital corporate bylaws. (3) The organized medical staff should maintain overall responsibility for the quality of the professional services provided by individuals with clinical privileges and should have the responsibility of reporting to the governing body. (4) The chief elected officer of the medical staff should represent the medical staff to the administration, governing body, and external agencies. (5) Government regulations which would mandate a hospital medical director who would have authority over the medical staff should be opposed. (6) The hospital medical director shall be a physician.” AMA Policy Compendium H.235.981

\(^{149}\) Clarifying that a medical director is not mandatory, but any time one is taken on, the position is governed by the medical staff bylaws.

\(^{150}\) Consistent with policy of the American Medical Association which provides that “The hospital governing body and medical staff should jointly determine if there is a need to employ a medical director; establish the purpose, duties, and responsibilities of this position, establish the qualification for this position and provide a mechanism for medical staff input into the selection, evaluation, and termination of the hospital medical director…” AMA Policy Compendium H.235.981.
give rise to any right of review. Any vacancy occurring in the office of the medical director [vice president of medical affairs] shall be filled according to these bylaws.

(4) Duties

(a) The medical director [vice president of medical affairs]’s responsibilities shall not usurp or conflict with the responsibilities of medical staff officers or department [or section] chairmen as described in these Bylaws. The medical director [vice president of medical affairs] has no authority to represent the medical staff or act independently regarding the medical staff’s functions or operations. The medical director [vice president of medical affairs] supervises the medical staff office personnel, and carries out such quality improvement and other duties as are specified in the medical director [vice president of medical affairs] job description as approved by the Medical Executive Committee, which approval shall not be unreasonably withheld.

(b) The medical director [vice president of medical affairs] will not serve as a member of any medical staff committee, and shall not chair or vote in medical staff committee meetings. The medical director [vice president of medical affairs] will have a vote if a member of a medical staff category that includes voting rights among its prerogatives, but only in clinical departments or sections in which the medical director [vice president of medical affairs] is a member and in general medical staff meetings or elections.

(c) The medical director [vice president of medical affairs] will serve as an advisor to the Medical Executive Committee and medical staff officers, department directors [section chiefs] and committee chairs regarding compliance with the medical staff documents, including the bylaws, rules and regulations and policies.

(d) The medical director [vice president of medical affairs] will preserve the confidentiality of peer review, credentialing and other medical staff data obtained.\footnote{Georgia Code section 31-7-143 defines the confidential nature of medical review records and proceedings broadly, extending the requirement of confidentiality in such a manner as would be likely to include a medical director, as follows: “The proceedings and records of medical review committees shall not be subject to discovery or introduction into evidence in any civil action against a provider of professional health services arising out of the matters which are the subject of evaluation and review by such committee; and no person who was in attendance at a meeting of such committee shall be permitted or required to testify in any such civil action as to any evidence or other matters produced or presented during the proceedings of such committee or as to any findings, recommendations, evaluations, opinions, or other actions of such committee or any members thereof. However, information, documents, or records otherwise available from original sources shall not be construed as immune from discovery or use in any such civil action merely because they were presented during proceedings of such committee; nor shall any person who testifies before such committee or who is a member of such committee be prevented from testifying as to matters within his knowledge, provided that such witness may not be questioned regarding his testimony before such a committee or opinions formed by him as a result of such committee hearings.”} Information the medical director [vice president of medical affairs] obtains through medical staff work will not be shared in a manner which is not protected under state
confidentiality and immunity statutes or which would violate the medical staff bylaws, rules and regulations or policy.

(e) The medical director [vice president of medical affairs] will cooperate with any requests of medical staff officers, department directors, and medical staff committee chairpersons to preserve confidentiality and promote frank discussion of medical staff matters, including leaving meetings to allow discussion to proceed without administrative personnel present.

ARTICLE III. MEMBERSHIP

A. Basis of Membership

Membership in the medical staff can be granted only according to the processes established in these bylaws and held only by professionals meeting the qualifications established under these bylaws.

Membership in the medical staff can be revoked only according to the processes established in these bylaws. Medical staff members cannot be fired from hospital employment or lose their hospital contracts as a result of good-faith participation in medical staff activities or leadership roles or otherwise fulfilling duties of medical staff membership.

B. Qualifications

Each medical staff member:

152 The medical staff bylaws are to include “The process for appointment and re-appointment to membership on the medical staff.” under pending Joint Commission standard MS 01.01.01, Element of Performance 27.
153 Medical staff members elected to serve in leadership positions for and by the medical staff should not be subject to hospital manipulation or retaliation in fulfilling their medical staff organization duties.
154 Meeting Georgia Regulation 290-9-7-.11(c)3, which requires that the medical staff bylaws, rules and regulations include: …Description of the qualifications and performance to be met by a candidate in order for the medical staff to recommend appointment or reappointment by the governing body…”. Further, Joint Commission standard MS 01.01.01, Element of Performance 13 calls for “the qualifications for appointment to the medical staff” to be included in the medical staff bylaws.
1. Holds an MD or DO degree; a DDS degree, or a DPM degree, or its equivalent;\footnote{Mandated by Georgia Regulation 290-9-7-.11 (a) 2(ii) which states, “Minimum requirements for medical staff appointments and clinical privileges shall include… confirmed educational qualifications for the position of appointment.” DHR Reg. “Equivalents” permits foreign degrees to be accepted.}

2. Is currently licensed to practice medicine [podiatry] or dentistry by the state of Georgia;\footnote{Mandated by Georgia Regulation 290-9-7-.11 (a) 2(i) which states, “Minimum requirements for medical staff appointments and clinical privileges shall include…(a) Valid and current Georgia license to practice the respective profession….”}

3. Holds current Drug Enforcement Agency registration if relevant to the member’s privileges;\footnote{Mandated by Georgia Regulation 290-9-7-.11 (a) 2(v) which states, “Minimum requirements for medical staff appointments and clinical privileges shall include… (c) current Drug Enforcement Agency registration, if applicable…”}

4. Complies with generally accepted standards of practice;\footnote{Georgia Regulation 290-9-7-.11(c) requires that “(t)he bylaws and rules and regulations … shall include at a minimum…(a) requirement that members of the medical staff comply with ethical and professional standards…”}

5. Abides by the ethical principles established by his/her profession;\footnote{Georgia Regulation 290-9-7-.11(c) requires that “(t)he bylaws and rules and regulations … shall include at a minimum…(a) requirement that members of the medical staff comply with ethical and professional standards…”}

6. Maintains health and mental status sufficient to perform medical and professional duties;\footnote{Mandated by Georgia Regulation 290-9-7-.11 (a) 2(iv), which state, “Minimum requirements for medical staff appointments and clinical privileges shall include… current health and mental status sufficient to perform medical and professional duties…”}

7. Can provide continuous care or demonstrates to the satisfaction of the credentials [medical executive] committee reliable and adequate coverage arrangements with other medical staff members to meet patient needs;\footnote{Implementing Georgia Regulation 290-9-7-.11 (d) 2, which states, “(i)f not addressed through the medical staff bylaws or rules and regulations, the medical staff shall develop and implement policies to address, at a minimum…A requirement that every member of the medical staff provide appropriate medical care for each of their patients until the patient is stable for discharge or until care of the patient has been transferred to another member of the medical staff or to another facility.”}

8. Attests that he/she has not been convicted of any crime related to the medical staff membership qualifications, functions or duties, as determined by the Medical Executive Committee;

9. Is insured against professional liability for all clinical privileges requested;\footnote{Applying AMA policy that “each hospital medical staff should determine for itself whether or not it will require professional liability insurance coverage as a condition for membership on the hospital medical staff.”} however, a temporary loss of professional liability insurance coverage (whether or not
limited to "tail" coverage) shall not be grounds for immediate termination of medical staff membership. The Medical Executive Committee shall determine the length and other conditions of an individual waiver of the coverage requirement.  

10. Is not excluded from participating in Medicare, Medicaid or any other federal health care program when such exclusion has been affirmatively imposed by government enforcement authorities, or accepted by the practitioner, as a sanction for unlawful conduct.  

11. Appropriately utilizes hospital facilities to provide quality patient care, consistent with the utilization review plan as recommended by the Medical Executive Committee.  

C. Effect of other Affiliations or Memberships  

No professionals are entitled to medical staff membership solely because they are employed by this hospital or its subsidiaries, have contracts with this hospital, have or have had medical staff membership or privileges at another health care facility, participate or do not participate in a particular medical group, managed care organization, staff. Our AMA also believes that, if equity demands that voluntary staff members should have insurance coverage so that the burden of financial loss would not fall entirely upon the hospital, then salaried hospital physicians should likewise be covered by adequate insurance or protected financially through self-insurance mechanisms established by the hospital, so that the burden would not fall unfairly upon the members of the voluntary medical staff.” AMA Policy Compendium H-230.995  

163 Based on AMA policy, which states, “Our AMA will: (1) Approach the American Hospital Association (AHA) to assess interest in commencing a dialogue regarding professional liability coverage requirements for medical staff members; develop with the AHA mutually acceptable alternatives to physicians facing "forced voluntary resignation" from the medical staff for not purchasing "tail" coverage or requiring the mandatory purchase of "tail" coverage; and, establish guidance on a reasonable time-frame in which physicians can obtain tail coverage when required; (2) Advocate for better disclosures by professional medical liability insurance carriers to their policyholders about the continuing financial health of the carrier; and advocate that carriers create and maintain a listing of alternate professional liability insurance carriers in good financial health which can provide physicians replacement tail or other coverage if the carrier becomes insolvent; and (3) Support model medical staff bylaw language stating: "Where continuous professional liability insurance coverage is a condition of medical staff membership, a temporary loss of professional liability insurance coverage (whether or not limited to "tail" coverage) is not grounds for immediate termination of medical staff membership. The Medical Executive Committee shall determine the length and other conditions of an individual waiver of the coverage requirement." AMA Policy Compendium D-435.978  

164 Federal law does not mandate that all medical staff members serve as Medicare providers, but does restrict hospitals from billing for services ordered or provided by professionals who are excluded by the federally funded programs. Therefore, current exclusion should be disclosed. Medicare exclusion status should be verified from the DHHS Office of the Inspector General.  

165 Georgia Code section 31-7-7 states that “…the hospital shall act in a nondiscriminatory manner upon such application expeditiously and without unnecessary delay considering the applicant on the basis of the applicant's demonstrated training, experience, competence, and availability and reasonable objectives, including, but not limited to, the appropriate utilization of hospital facilities …” Under bylaws section II.C.11.b(1) provides for the utilization review committee to recommend improvements to the utilization review plan to the medical executive committee. Georgia regulation 290-9-7-.11(a)1 states,” Any physician podiatrist, or dentist providing patient care, whether directly or by contract with the hospital, shall obtain clinical privileges through the hospital’s medical staff credentialing process.”
IPA, PPO, PHO, hospital-sponsored foundation, or other organization or in contracts with a third-party payor which contracts with this hospital. Lawful pursuit of business interests by members cannot adversely affect medical staff membership.

D. Discrimination Prohibited

No person otherwise qualified as provided in these bylaws shall be denied medical staff membership or particular clinical privileges solely on the basis of ethnic background, race, culture, gender, sexual preference, language, religion, mental capacity and physical disability. 

E. Term

1. Length

Each membership term is limited to two years, subject to renewal consistent with these bylaws, which terms shall be staggered, based on the month membership was originally granted.

2. Resignation

Any medical staff member may resign membership by providing written notice, stating the effective date of resignation, to the medical staff office.

F. Duties

Medical staff members

1. abide by the medical staff bylaws, rules and regulations and policies;

2. accept assignment to serve on standing and special medical staff committees;

3. cooperate with medical staff committees and representatives in the discharge of medical staff functions, including responding promptly and appropriately to correspondence, including special notices;

4. submit to mental or physical screenings, as requested by the Medical Executive Committee, to establish continuing qualification for membership;

5. support fair peer review by participating appropriately in medical staff peer review activities, such as providing information to medical staff committees

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167 “The Joint Commission considers diversity to include race, culture, gender, religion, ethnic background, sexual preference, language, mental capacity and physical disability,” JC Accreditation Manual, Introduction to Standard MS 06.01.03 , Note 2.

168 JC Standard MS.06.01.07, Element of Performance 8 allows privileges to be granted for a period not to exceed two years. Further, the HCQIA imposes a duty on hospitals to check the National Practitioner Data Bank at least every two years on every medical staff member and every practitioner who holds clinical privileges. Membership and privileges are most efficiently coordinated in the credentialing process.

169 Staggering membership may improve the efficiency of the credentialing process.
regarding matters under review or investigation, serving on hearing committees and
acting as proctors as requested;

6. obtain consultation when a patient’s condition could be improved by involvement
of another member or other professional, or when otherwise appropriate;\(^{172}\)

7. refrain from any retaliation against any other member of the medical staff
because that member claims a right or privilege afforded by, or seeks implementation
of any provision of, these medical staff bylaws.

G. Dues\(^{173}\)

Members shall pay annual dues in [an amount set by the Medical Executive Committee
the first meeting of the medical staff year] [the amount of $______]. Failure to pay dues
in a timely manner shall be grounds for ineligibility for membership renewal or
corrective action.

H. Voting

Voting by mail ballot or in meetings of the medical staff, its committees, departments,
sections and any subdivisions, shall be conducted in accordance with the bylaws. All
active medical staff members have the right to vote in medical staff meetings and in
meetings of any committee, section, and department in which they are members. Any
member who, by virtue of position, attends a meeting in more than one capacity is
entitled to only one vote. Unless otherwise specified in the bylaws or at the time of
appointment, only medical staff members may vote on committee business. Under no
circumstances shall an abstention or failure to vote be counted as either an affirmative or
negative vote. Voting by proxy is not permitted.\(^{174}\)

\(^{170}\) Implementing pending JC standard MS 01.01.01, Element of Performance 5, “The medical staff
complies with the medical staff bylaws, rules and regulations, and policies.”

\(^{171}\) Mandated by Georgia Regulation 290-9-7-.11 (c)6, which states “the bylaws and rules and regulations
…shall include at a minimum…Requirements for regular health screenings for all active members of the
medical staff that are developed in consultation with hospital administration, occupational health, and
infection control/ safety staff. The health screenings shall be sufficient to identify conditions which may
place patients or other personnel at risk for infection, injury, or improper care. There shall be a mechanism
for the reporting of the screening results to the hospital, either through the medical staff or otherwise;”.

\(^{172}\) To promote compliance with Georgia Regulations, which state, “(t)he bylaws and rules and regulations
… shall include at a minimum … (a) requirement that referral for consultations will be provided to patients
when a patient’s physical or mental condition exceeds the clinical expertise of the attending member of the
medical staff…” DHR Reg. 290-9-7-.11 (c)9. Also, JC standard MS.03.01.03, Element of Performance 3,
states, “The organized medical staff, through its designated mechanism, determines the circumstances
under which consultation or management by a physician or other licensed independent practitioner is
required.”

\(^{173}\) Maintaining a treasury will permit the medical staff ready access to assistance from consultants and
others, a means of providing incentives to leadership and membership, a source to support priorities of the
medical staff and to otherwise support the medical staff organization.

\(^{174}\) AMA policy provides that “Proxy voting prior to or at medical staff meetings should not be permitted in
states that “[o]rdinarily [proxy voting] should neither be allowed nor required, because proxy voting is
I. Emergency Call

Medical staff membership or privileges do not require emergency call service. Emergency department backup call panel service is voluntary. [Members shall serve on call consistent with compensation contracts entered into individually with the hospital.] [Members shall serve on call to the emergency department as determined by the department in which privileges are held.] [Medical Staff members who are [55] years of age and older shall be exempt from call duties.] [Medical Staff members who have served [10] years on the active staff shall be exempt from call duties.] [Medical staff members who have been granted a leave of absence as outlined in the medical staff bylaws shall be exempt from call duties during the time of the leave.] [Members who have upon written request received a waiver from the Medical Executive Committee based on disability, hardship, medical staff leadership demands, or other reason shall be exempt from call duties for the term of the waiver.]

J. Leave of Absence

1. Member Request

Any medical staff member may obtain a voluntary leave of absence from the medical staff when he/she will be unavailable to provide services and fulfill medical staff duties for a period of more than [four] consecutive months, upon submitting a notice to the medical staff office stating the approximate period of leave desired, which may not exceed twelve months or the end of the current membership term, whichever is shorter. The notice shall also state the date the leave will begin, which will not be sooner than 30 days from the date of the notice by which date the member must have completed all outstanding medical records at the hospital. If medical records are not completed when the leave of absence begins, the Medical Executive Committee may deny reinstatement. Members are not entitled to more than one leave of absence during a two-year membership term unless the exception is approved by the Medical Executive Committee. Abuse of the ability to obtain leaves of absence can be grounds for denial of membership renewal. However, requests for leave of absence to fulfill military service obligations [or medical missionary or other humanitarian service], to obtain additional professional training, or to obtain treatment for a incompatible with the essential characteristics of a deliberative assembly in which membership is individual, personal and nontransferable."

175 EMTALA Interpretative Guidelines state that medical staff bylaws or policies and procedures must define the on-call physician’s responsibilities to respond, examine and treat patients.

176 Per MAG Policy # 130.976. "A physician's participation on a hospital's emergency department backup call panel shall be voluntary and shall not be required as a condition of medical staff privileges."

177 Compensation for on-call service provided to hospitals is supported by AMA Policy Compendium D-130.997, “Reimbursement of On-Call Physicians.”

178 EMTALA does not require physicians to serve on call but does require hospitals to arrange for call coverage. Because the burden of call varies according to specialty, departments are best situated to determine whether department members must provide on call services to the emergency department, and if so, to find an approach that works for the specialties in the department.

179 CMS has concluded that exceptions to on-call requirements are consistent with EMTALA. CMS Memorandum Ref #S&C-02-34, “On-Call Requirements-EMTALA” (June 13, 2002).
medical or behavioral condition shall not be denied or result in denial of membership renewal.

During the period of the leave, the member shall not exercise clinical privileges at the hospital and membership rights and responsibilities shall be inactive, but the obligation to pay dues, if any, shall continue, unless waived by the Medical Executive Committee.

2. Members’ Reinstatement Responsibilities

At least [six] weeks prior to the end of the leave period, the medical staff office shall provide the member with a termination of leave form as promulgated by the Medical Executive Committee. The member shall submit a summary of relevant activities during the leave. The Medical Executive Committee shall make a recommendation to the board that will be processed in the same manner as all recommendations on medical staff membership renewal. If the member’s term of medical staff membership has expired during the leave of absence, the request for reinstatement shall be made, processed and acted upon in the same manner as an application for membership renewal.

Failure, without good cause, to return the completed termination of leave form shall be deemed a voluntary resignation from the medical staff and shall result in automatic termination of membership, privileges, and prerogatives. Such automatic termination shall be entitled to hearing and appeal rights as provided under these Bylaws for the sole purpose of determining whether the failure to request reinstatement was unintentional or excusable, or otherwise. A request for medical staff membership subsequently received from a member so terminated shall be submitted and processed in the manner specified for applications for initial membership.

K. Categories

Members are classified by category.

1. Active Staff

a) Practice

Active members

(1) regularly admit, attend, or provide services to patients in the hospital; [admit, attend, or provide services to at least [25] patients in the hospital per year]; and/or

(2) serve as department chairs, [section chiefs,] representatives, or officers of the medical staff.

[A member of the Active Staff who, upon application for membership renewal, does not meet the specified qualifications in this section shall upon request be placed on probationary status for a one-year period during which time he/she shall have no medical
staff voting privileges. At the conclusion of the probationary period, his/her status shall be reviewed by the appropriate Department [and section] and the Credentials Committee, which shall recommend to the Executive Committee whether to renew voting active membership, or to move to a medical staff category for which the member qualifies.]

b) Prerogatives
Active staff members are entitled to

(1) Exercise privileges granted in accordance with these bylaws;

(2) Vote at medical staff meetings and in meetings of the departments [sections,] and committees of which they are members;

(3) Stand for nomination and election and, if elected, serve as medical staff officers, department [and section] leaders and medical staff representatives.

2. Affiliate Staff

a) Practice
Affiliate members

(1) Do not admit patients [independently];

(2) Refer patients to [hospitalists and other] members with admitting privileges;

(3) Follow and visit patients in the hospital.

b) Prerogatives
Affiliate staff members are entitled to

(1) Exercise privileges granted in accordance with these bylaws;

(2) Vote at medical staff meetings and in meetings of the departments [, sections,] and committees of which they are members.

3. Consulting Staff

a) Practice
Consulting staff members

(1) Consult on request of medical staff members

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180 Permits an active member time to build up practice after serving in office, without losing active staff status.
181 If the medical staff allows dependent privileges for physicians who do not have an active hospital practice but wish to maintain a relationship with the medical staff.
b) Prerogatives
Consulting staff members are entitled to

(1) Exercise privileges granted in accordance with these bylaws;

(2) Vote at medical staff meetings and in meetings of the departments [sections,] and committees of which they are members. Consulting staff members who are distant providers of telemedicine services shall be excused from any meeting attendance requirements and may not exercise voting rights.

4. Courtesy

a) Practice
Courtesy staff members attend, admit or provide services to fewer than [25] patients in the hospital during one year. Courtesy staff members who exceed the patient limit will be given the option to apply for active staff status. Any courtesy staff member reaching the limit in two consecutive years must either move to active staff membership or resign medical staff membership.

b) Prerogatives
Courtesy staff members are entitled to

(1) Exercise privileges granted in accordance with these bylaws;

(2) Vote at medical staff meetings and in meetings of the departments [sections,] and committees of which they are members.

5. Administrative

The Administrative staff shall consist of those members hired or contracted to perform only administrative duties [full time] and do not have clinical privileges.

a) Prerogatives
Administrative staff members are entitled to attend medical staff department [section,] and committee meetings without vote.

6. [Federally Employed Military Staff]

a) [Practice
Federally employed military staff members

(1) Are exempt from Georgia licensure requirements but must be licensed in at least one other state;
(2) Are members in good standing of the active or provisional medical staff of Federal military facilities with whom the medical staff has a memorandum of understanding in which specific operation criteria are delineated.

(3) Attend, admit or provide services in the hospital to patients who are eligible for care at military health care facilities;

b) Prerogatives

Federally employed military staff members are entitled to

(1) Exercise privileges granted in accordance with these bylaws;

(2) Vote at meetings of the departments [sections,] and committees of which they are members.]

7. [Call Coverage Staff

a) Practice

Call coverage staff members come to the Hospital when so scheduled to provide emergency call coverage and admit patients consistent with privileges granted to them pursuant to these bylaws.

b) Prerogatives

Call coverage staff members are entitled to

(1) Exercise privileges granted in accordance with these bylaws while on call;

(2) Attend medical staff meetings and meetings of the departments [sections,] and committees of which they are members, without voting rights. ]

8. Honorary Staff

a) Practice

Honorary staff members

(1) Are invited to the category by the Medical Executive Committee to honor their past service to the medical staff, without meeting medical staff membership requirements.

(2) Do not have clinical privileges.

b) Prerogatives

Honorary staff members

(1) Do not hold office or vote but may serve on medical staff committees with vote;
(2) Do not pay medical staff dues;

(3) May attend all continuing education and medical staff meetings.

9. Modification in Category
A medical staff member may at any time request a promotion in his/her staff category or clinical privileges or modification of department assignment by submitting a written application, on a form approved by the Medical Executive Committee, to the medical staff office. Promotion may be recommended by the credentials committee to the Medical Executive Committee following review of the member’s performance within the hospital. Change in category may also be recommended by the credentials committee to the Medical Executive Committee without the member’s request if the member’s practice no longer comports with the category to which the member has been assigned.

ARTICLE IV. CREDENTIALING
Except in the limited cases specified in these medical staff bylaws, no person shall exercise clinical privileges in the hospital unless and until that person applies for, receives the Medical Executive Committee’s recommendation for, and is granted medical staff membership and/or privileges as set forth in these bylaws, or, with respect to allied health professionals, has been granted privileges under applicable medical staff processes established in these medical staff bylaws.

Except as otherwise specifically provided by these bylaws pertaining to exclusive contracts, medical staff membership and clinical privileges shall only be determined using criteria furthering the quality of health care, treatment and services provided at the hospital. Economic credentialing shall not be implemented at this hospital.

In connection with all applications for membership and/or privileges, the applicant shall have the burden of producing sufficient information of clinical and professional performance to permit an adequate evaluation of the applicant’s qualifications and suitability for the clinical privileges and staff category requested, to resolve any reasonable doubts about these matters, and to satisfy any request for such information.

\(^{182}\) A member should not have to apply to resign privileges or move to a lower category.

\(^{183}\) Called for under JC standard MS.06.01.05 Element of Performance 1.

\(^{184}\) The medical staff bylaws are to include “the process for credentialing and re-credentialing licensed independent practitioners” under Joint Commission standard MS 01.01.01, Element of Performance 26.

\(^{185}\) Georgia regulation 290-9-7-.11(a)2 states, “The medical staff shall be responsible for the examination of credentials of any candidate for medical staff membership and for any other individuals seeking clinical privileges and for the recommendations to the governing body concerning appointment of such candidates.” Under JC standard MS .06.01.03, Element of Performance 2, “the credentialing process is based on recommendations by the organized medical staff.”

\(^{186}\) Economic credentialing is strongly opposed by the American Medical Association, which defines economic credentialing as “the use of economic criteria unrelated to quality of care or professional competency in determining an individual’s qualifications for initial or continuing hospital medical staff membership or privileges…” AMA Compendium H-230.975.
A. Application Form

Application for medical staff membership and privileges is made in writing on a form approved by the Medical Executive Committee and signed by the applicant. Application forms are submitted to the medical staff office along with a non-refundable application fee [as set by the Medical Executive Committee annually] [of $______] payable to the medical staff. No application will be processed without payment of the fee. The application form requests at least:

1. Information demonstrating that the applicant meets all qualifications for membership established by these bylaws;

2. The medical staff category, department [section] and specific clinical privileges the applicant seeks;

3. Access to morbidity and mortality data and other applicant-specific data reviewed by an organization that currently privileges the applicant, if available, to establish current clinical competence;

4. Recommendations from peers practicing in the same specialty, who are personally familiar with the applicant’s ability to practice;

5. Any surname previously used by the applicant, such as maiden name, other married names, and any aliases;

6. Information as to whether the applicant’s membership and/or clinical privileges have ever, voluntarily or involuntarily, been revoked, suspended, reduced or not renewed by any other healthcare facility, medical or professional group or organization, and whether any professional license, certificate or registration issued to

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187 The application form should be reviewed routinely to determine that it does not seek information that is irrelevant to the requirements set by the medical staff bylaws, such as economic or political information. Some medical staffs may approve the Georgia Uniform Practitioner Healthcare Credentialing Application Form and the Georgia Uniform Practitioner Healthcare Credentialing Reappointment Form for use by the medical staff. Both forms and background information are available at http://www.georgiacredentialing.org/

188 Application fees discourage frivolous applications and defray the time and costs of processing. Paying application fees to the medical staff organization provides revenue for medical staff functions, and at least in part compensates for the hours spent by medical staff leaders and members in application review.

189 Called for by JC standard MS.06.01.05 Element of Performance 2

190 To meet the requirements of JC standard MS.06.01.05 Element of Performance 8 that the organized medical staff evaluate practitioner specific data and morbidity and mortality data before recommending privileges.

191 Mandated by Georgia Regulation 290-9-7-.11 (a) 2(iii) which states, “Minimum requirements for medical staff appointments and clinical privileges shall include… References for practice and performance background.” Further, JC standard MS.07.01.03 Element of Performance 4 states that “Peer recommendations are obtained from a practitioner in the same professional discipline as the applicant with personal knowledge of the applicant’s ability to practice.”

192 JC standard MS.06.01.05, Element of Performance 8 asks that the medical staff evaluate both voluntary and involuntary action.
the applicant has ever voluntarily or involuntarily\textsuperscript{193} been revoked, suspended, reduced, terminated or not renewed. The application will also request information as to whether the applicant’s DEA registration has ever been suspended or revoked or voluntarily or involuntarily relinquished\textsuperscript{194}.

7. A statement that no health problems exist that could affect his or her ability to perform the privileges requested.\textsuperscript{195} The applicant agrees to supply health status information as deemed appropriate by the Medical Executive Committee, which may include a complete history and physical examination. Any such examination shall be at the applicant’s expense by a physician approved by the Medical Executive Committee.\textsuperscript{196}

8. Agreement to present to the medical staff office a valid and current hospital picture identification or government-issued picture identification.\textsuperscript{197}

9. Information on all final judgments or settlements in professional liability cases against the applicant.\textsuperscript{198}

10. A statement that the applicant is or is not currently excluded from participation in Medicare or any other federally funded program.\textsuperscript{199}

The applicant is responsible for ensuring that the information requested in the application is sent to the medical staff office. If the application is missing information or needs clarification, the medical staff office will contact the applicant electronically or otherwise expeditiously. The applicant is responsible to satisfy any reasonable request for additional information or clarification. If the applicant fails to provide all required information within [90] days of receipt of the application in the medical staff office,

\textsuperscript{193} JC standard MS.06.01.05, Element of Performance 8 asks that the medical staff evaluate both voluntary and involuntary action.

\textsuperscript{194} JC standard MS.06.01.05, Element of Performance 8 asks that the medical staff evaluate both voluntary and involuntary action.

\textsuperscript{195} Based on JC standard MS.06.01.05, Element of Performance 5 and Georgia regulation 290-9-7-.11(a)2(iv).

\textsuperscript{196} JC notes regarding ability to perform requested privileges state, “In instances where there is doubt about an applicant’s ability to perform privileges requested, an evaluation by an external and internal source may be required. The request for an evaluation rests with the organized medical staff.” JC standard MS Accreditation Manual for Healthcare Organizations, page 28-29.

\textsuperscript{197} Called for by JC standard MS.06.01.03 Element of Performance 5.

\textsuperscript{198} JC standard MS.06.01.05 Element of Performance 8 states that before recommending privileges, the organized medical staff evaluates any evidence of an unusual pattern or excessive number of professional liability actions resulting in a final judgment against the applicant. AMA policy more specifically states, “The AMA opposes the need for reporting on medical staff and other non-licensing board applications, including insurance company credentialing applications, (excepting professional liability insurance applications) any threatened, pending, or closed professional liability claims where the claim did not result in payment on behalf of that physician.” AMA Policy Compendium H-435.963

\textsuperscript{199} No federal law forces any medical staff member to serve as a Medicare provider, but hospitals are restricted from billing for services ordered or provided by professionals who are currently excluded from the federally funded programs. Therefore, current exclusion should be disclosed. Medicare exclusion status should be verified from the DHHS Office of the Inspector General.
despite notice of information that is outstanding, the application will be considered to have been withdrawn, and the applicant shall not be entitled to hearing rights provided under these Bylaws. The applicant may reapply when he/she can provide complete information.

When the medical staff office has received and verified all required information, and has obtained information on the applicant from the National Practitioner Data Bank and other relevant practitioner data bases, the medical staff office shall classify the application as completed.

B. Effect of Application
Each applicant agrees to appear for interviews in regard to application, authorizes the medical staff to consult with members of medical staffs of other hospitals with which the applicant has been associated and with others who may have information bearing on applicant’s competence and ethical qualifications, consents to review of all records and documents related to the applicant’s professional qualifications for staff membership. The applicant releases from any liability all representatives of the hospital and medical staff for their acts performed in good faith and without malice in connection with verifying and evaluating the application and the applicant’s credentials, and releases from any liability all individuals and organizations who provide information to the hospital in good faith and without malice concerning the applicant’s competence, ethics, character and other qualifications for staff membership and clinical privileges, including information which otherwise may be privileged or confidential. The applicant also agrees to the bound by the medical staff bylaws, rules and regulations during the course of the application process, whether or not the membership and privileges requested are granted.

C. Application Process
The application process is coordinated by the medical staff office.

1. [Section and] Department Review

The completed application and all supporting information are reviewed by the [section and] department in which the applicant seeks privileges. [The section review and recommendation is provided to the department chair.] The department reviews the application and its supporting documentation, which review may include a personal or telephone interview by the department chair and members of the department. The department recommendation regarding membership, membership category, and privileges, and any recommended limitations, based on its evaluation of evidence of the

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200 Georgia Regulations 290-9-7-.11 2.(vi) require as a minimum requirement for medical staff appointments and clinical privileges “(e)vidence of inquiry through relevant practitioner databases, such as databases maintained by licensing boards and the National Practitioner Data Bank…”

201 Implementing Joint Commission MS 01.01.01 Element of Performance 27, which calls for the medical staff bylaws to include “the process for appointment and re-appointment to membership on the medical staff.”
applicant's training, experience, and demonstrated ability, is reported to [the credentials committee.] [the Medical Executive Committee.]

2. **Credentials Committee Review**

The credentials committee reviews the [section and] department recommendations, and evaluates the supporting information. The credentials committee may elect to interview the applicant [by telephone] and seek additional information to complete its recommendation on the application. The credentials committee makes a recommendation to the Medical Executive Committee as to membership and membership category, privileges and any limitations on those privileges, based on its evaluation of the evidence of the applicant’s training, experience and ability to meet all qualifications established by these bylaws.

3. **Medical Executive Committee Review**

   **a) Medical Executive Committee Action**

   At its next scheduled meeting following receipt of the department [and credentials committee] recommendation, the Medical Executive Committee shall act on the application. If necessary, it may return the application back to the [credential committee] department for further evaluation or to obtain additional information, specifying a date for the recommendation to be provided to the Medical Executive Committee. The medical executive action may be deferred, for good cause, to the next scheduled Medical Executive Committee meeting. The Medical Executive Committee recommendation shall specify action on membership, and if membership is recommended, membership category, clinical privileges, any limitations on privileges, and any other conditions to be attached on membership and privileges.

   **b) Effect of Medical Executive Committee Action**

   The Medical Executive Committee’s favorable recommendation shall be forwarded to the board for action consistent with these bylaws.

   The applicant is provided notice according to these bylaws of any adverse recommendation of the Medical Executive Committee. The hearing provisions of these bylaws will govern any subsequent action.

   Whenever the Medical Executive Committee recommends membership, but recommends denial or restriction of a requested privilege, the favorable recommendation shall be transmitted to the Board for action, and the unfavorable recommendation will be the subject of notice according to these bylaws, and governed by the hearing provisions of these bylaws.
4. **Board Action Following Medical Executive Committee Action**

The Board acts on membership and privileges only after there has been a recommendation from the Medical Executive Committee, or if a hearing was held on a negative recommendation, after a hearing committee decision.

   a) **Board Adopts Medical Executive Committee Action**

   The Board acts on favorable medical executive recommendations, and on unfavorable Medical Executive Committee recommendations on medical staff memberships and privileges in which no hearing was held, at the next Board meeting. The Board gives great weight to the recommendation of the Medical Executive Committee. Board adoption of the Medical Executive Committee recommendation constitutes the final action. The administrator notifies the applicant of the final action.

   b) **Board Rejects Medical Executive Committee Action**

   If the Board’s preliminary decision is contrary to the favorable recommendation of the Medical Executive Committee in whole or in part, the Board of Trustees may remand the matter to the Medical Executive Committee for further consideration. If the Board’s preliminary decision remains adverse to the applicant in whole or in part, the administrator provides notice to the applicant according to these bylaws. The hearing provisions of these bylaws will govern any subsequent action.

D. **Application for Membership Renewal**

At least 5 months prior to the expiration of a membership term, the medical staff office sends membership renewal application forms to the member. The medical staff office sends a reminder to the member if no information has been received on the application. If the member does not file a completed application for membership renewal, the membership will expire at the end of the membership term.

1. **Supporting Information**

The membership renewal application shall request updates to the information provided in previous membership application process. In the event that there is a delay in obtaining any required information, or if clarification of information is needed, the applicant will be notified of his/her responsibility to obtain the necessary information. All applications for membership and privileges renewal are processed in the same manner as applications for new membership under these bylaws. The membership renewal application process...
results in re-determination of the member’s eligibility for medical staff membership and
assignment to the requested medical staff membership category.

The membership renewal application will be considered in conjunction with review of the
member-specific morbidity and mortality data, as compared with aggregate data, the
medical staff record of the member’s compliance with membership duties under these
bylaws, and other information about the member’s practice at the hospital.

2. Insufficient Information

To obtain additional information as needed regarding a member’s membership renewal
application, the relevant department [and section] requests that the member provide
additional recommendations from peers in the same specialty personally familiar with the
member’s practice.

E. Process Timeline

The board acts on the application within [90] days from the date the application is
deemed fully verified and completed by the medical staff office.

F. Expedited Credentialing Process

A completed application for membership or membership renewal can be expedited if it
documents each of these criteria:

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206 Called for under JC standard MS.06.01.05, Element of Performance 8.
207 JC standard MS.06.01.05, Element of Performance 2 states, “(w)hen renewing privileges, review of the
practitioner’s performance within the organization.”
208 “Upon renewal of privileges, when insufficient practitioner-specific data are available, the medical staff
obtains and evaluates peer recommendations.” JC standard MS.07.01.03, Element of Performance 2.
209 JC standard MS.06.01.05 Element of Performance 10 states,”(c)ompleted applications for privileges are
acted upon within the time period specified in the medical staff bylaws.” JC standard MS.06.01.07, Element
of Performance 3, “the organization completes the credentialing and privileging decision process in a
timely manner.” Georgia Regulation 290-9-7-.09 (b) requires that the board act “…within a reasonable
period of time after considering the recommendations of the medical staff.” However, Georgia statutes
require, “Whenever any licensed doctor of medicine, doctor of podiatric medicine, doctor of osteopathic
medicine, or doctor of dentistry shall make application for permission to treat patients in any hospital
owned or operated by the state, any political subdivision thereof, or any municipality, the hospital shall act
in a nondiscriminatory manner upon such application expeditiously and without unnecessary delay
considering the applicant on the basis of the applicant's demonstrated training, experience, competence, and
availability and reasonable objectives, including, but not limited to, the appropriate utilization of hospital
facilities; but in no event shall final action thereon be taken later than 90 days following receipt of the
application; provided, however, whenever the applicant is licensed by any governmental entity outside the
continental limits of the United States, the hospital shall have 120 days to take action following receipt of
the application. This subsection shall apply solely to applications by licensed doctors of medicine, doctors
of podiatric medicine, doctors of osteopathic medicine, and doctors of dentistry who are not members of
the staff of the hospital in which privileges are sought at the time an application is submitted and by those
not privileged, at such time, to practice in such hospital under a previous grant of privileges.” Georgia Code
Section 31-7-7.(a)
210 Implementing JC standard MS.06.01.11, which states that “an expedited governing body approval
process may be used for initial appointment and reappointment to the medical staff and when granting
privileges when criteria for that process are met.”

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• No current or previously successful challenges to any professional licensure or registration;

• No involuntary termination of medical staff membership at any other organization;

• No involuntary limitation, reduction, denial, or loss of clinical privileges to date;

• No excessive number or unusual pattern of professional liability actions resulting in final judgment against the applicant. Applications meeting these criteria are reviewed by the relevant department chair(s); if approved, by the credentials chair; if approved, by the Medical Executive Committee, in lieu of the application process described in these bylaws. If any of these medical staff authorities makes any adverse recommendation, the application shall no longer be eligible for expedition, and shall revert to the regular application process. An expedited application may be acted upon by a committee of the hospital board, if permitted by the hospital’s bylaws or policy.

G. Credentials Files

All medical staff credentialing files shall be subject to confidentiality requirements and protections of state and federal law.

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211 JC standard MS.06.01.11 Element of Performance 1 states, "The organized medical staff develops criteria for an expedited process for granting privileges."

212 As called for by Elements of Performance 4-7 for JC standard MS.08.01.01.

213 Implementing AMA policy, which states, “The AMA urges medical staffs (1) to establish and incorporate into their medical staff bylaws policies covering the management and maintenance of credentials files.”AMA Policy Compendium H-230.983

214 Georgia’s confidentiality protections are described by the court in Emory Clinic v. Houston as “an absolute embargo upon the discovery and use of all proceedings, records, findings and recommendations of peer review groups and medical review committees in civil litigation.”
1. **Hospital Closure**

   In the event of closure of the Hospital, the credentialing files shall be placed with a custodian mutually acceptable to the medical staff and the Hospital.\textsuperscript{215}

2. **Access To Credentials Files**

   Upon taking a corrective action, access to the subject’s credentials file shall be governed by the hearing procedures established in these medical staff bylaws. In all other circumstances, access is governed by this section.

   a) Only those medical staff leaders and committee members and administrative personnel whose duties require access to the credentials files of a particular credentials file are permitted to request and review its contents.

   b) Medical staff members shall be granted access to their own credentials file upon request,\textsuperscript{216} but only under the following conditions:

   - (1) The member shall request access in writing, on a form provided by the medical staff office, directed to the chief of staff or the chief of staff’s designee;

   - (2) The member may review the file only in the medical staff office, at a time convenient to the member and the medical staff office manager [the president of the medical staff or designee], in whose presence the member’s review will take place. The member may receive a copy of only those documents provided by or addressed personally to the member. A written summary of all other information, including medical staff committee findings, letters of reference, proctoring reports, complaints, and incident reports, but not disclosing the source of the information, shall be provided, if requested, to the member by the medical staff office manager [the chief of the medical staff or designee], within a reasonable period of time.

   - (3) Members may request that the Medical Executive Committee correct or delete inaccuracies from their files. Such requests must be in writing, supporting the request. The member shall be notified promptly, in writing, of the decision of the Medical Executive Committee. In any case, a member shall have the right to add a statement to his or her credentials file responding to any information contained in the file.

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\textsuperscript{215} Georgia Regulation 290-9-7-.09 (b) mandates that “(p)rior to the hospital closure, the hospital shall inform the Department of the planned storage location for patient medical records, medical staff information, and other critical information after closure. The hospital shall publish in a widely circulated newspaper(s) in the hospital’s service area a notice indicating where medical records and other critical information can be retrieved and shall notify the Department of Transportation of the anticipated date of closure for removal of the hospital locator signs. Following closure, the Department shall be notified of any change in location of the patients’ medical records, medical staff information, and other critical information from the published location.” DHR Reg.

\textsuperscript{216} It is appropriate to allow every individual to see his or her own file, but important that information is not removed from the file, or that access is not granted more generously to some than it is to others.
3. Contents of Credentials Files

Documentation [of an unusual quality or source] about the professional competence or the conduct of a member other than routine information from medical staff quality improvement activities shall be directed by the medical staff office to the relevant department chairman to determine whether the information is obviously specious, incorrect or unreliable and should be discarded rather than inserted into the member’s credentials file.

4. Use of Credentials File in Credentialing

Prior to making its recommendation on membership renewal, the credentials committee reviews the contents of the members’ credentials file. In the event that adverse information is not utilized as the basis for a request for corrective action or adverse recommendation in the membership renewal process, the credentials committee shall recommend to the Medical Executive Committee that the adverse information be removed from the file and discarded. The Medical Executive Committee may determine that such information is required for continuing evaluation of the member’s character, competence or professional performance.

ARTICLE V. PRIVILEGING

Only those clinical privileges specifically requested by and granted to the member by the board, upon Medical Executive Committee recommendation, in accordance with these bylaws, can be exercised in the hospital. Clinical privileges may be modified or terminated by the board only upon recommendation of the Medical Executive Committee, and only for reasons directly related to quality of patient care and other provisions of the medical staff bylaws.

A. Requirements for privileges

1. Application

To request privileges, an applicant or member must complete the privileging request form establishing the criteria for each privilege recommended by the department and approved

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217 To ensure that credentials information is used in the credentialing process, and to allow for credentials files to be purged of irrelevant data at least during the biannual membership renewal process if not more frequently.

218 Pending Joint Commission Standard MS 01.01.01, Element of Performance 14 states that the medical staff bylaws include “The process for privileging and re-privileging licensed independent practitioners...”

219 To prevent members from having to accept privileges they did not request and do not wish to have, as under some “core” privileges arrangements.

220 Consistent with AMA policy, which states, “The AMA opposes the use of economic criteria not related to quality to determine an individual physician’s qualifications for the granting or renewal of medical staff membership or privileges.” AMA Policy Compendium H-230.976.

221 Required by Georgia Regulation 290-9-7-.11(c)4, which states, “...The bylaws and rules and regulations ... shall include at a minimum: ... Criteria and procedures for recommending the privileges to be granted to individual physicians, dentists, or podiatrists.”
by the Medical Executive Committee. Privilege requests must be made in conjunction
with membership and membership renewal application, but may also be made during
the membership term if additional privileges are sought.

All requests for clinical privileges shall be processed pursuant to the procedures
described in Article IV and accordingly determined, based on the applicant’s
education, training, professional competence, compliance with accepted standards of
care, current health status, and the other requirements consistent with the criteria
adopted consistent with these bylaws.

2. Board Certification

Departments [The Medical Executive Committee] may [shall] include in the criteria for
privileges specific board certification and eligibility requirements relevant to specific
clinical privileges.

3. Resource Availability

For every privileges request, the department’s recommendation for clinical privileges
affirms that the hospital has the ability at the time or will have at a specified time to
provide adequate facilities and supportive services for the applicant.

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222 Mandated by Georgia Regulation 290-9-7-.11 (a) 2(vii) which states, “Minimum requirements for
medical staff appointments and clinical privileges shall include… (c)ongruity of the qualifications and/or
training requirements with the privilege requested….”
223 Required under Georgia regulation 290-9-7-.11 (a) 3 which states “(t)he medical staff shall evaluate at
least biennially the credentials and professional performance of any individual granted clinical privileges
for consideration for reappointment.”
224 “Any physician, podiatrist, or dentist providing patient care, whether directly or by contract with the
hospital, shall obtain clinical privileges through the hospital’s medical staff credentialing process.”
225 Georgia Regulations 290-9-7-.11 (a)1.
226 Mandated by Georgia Regulation 290-9-7-.11 (a) 2(vii).which states, “Minimum requirements for
medical staff appointments and clinical privileges shall include… (c)ongruity of the qualifications and/or
training requirements with the privilege requested….”.
227 Georgia Regulation section 290-9-7 defines board certified and board eligibility:
“(a) Board certified means current certification of a licensed physician by a specialty board recognized by
the American Board of Medical Specialties (ABMS) or American Osteopathic Association (AOA) or other
nationally recognized specialty’s certifying board.
(b) Board eligible means a licensed physician who meets the criteria for examination for the designated
specialty as published by that nationally recognized specialty’s certifying board. A hospital’s medical staff
may apply
more stringent criteria to be used in its internal definition of board eligible, at its discretion.”
228 Called for by JC standard MS.06.01.01, Element of Performance 1; “There is a process to determine
whether sufficient space, equipment, staffing and financial resources are in place or available with in a
specified time frame to support each requested privilege.”
4. Proctoring

New medical staff members, and those granted new clinical privileges, undergo proctoring. Performance on an appropriate number of cases within a specified time period, as established by the [department] rules and regulations, shall be observed by the chairman or the chairman's designee. When the required number of cases has been proctored, the department shall review the proctoring reports and recommend to the Medical Executive Committee, based on the evaluation of the types and numbers of cases observed and the member’s performance, acceptance of the member’s satisfaction of the relevant proctoring requirements, continuation of a period of proctoring on some or all privileges for stated reasons, or termination of some or all privileges.

B. Types of Privileges

[1. Dependent privileges]

Dependent privileges restrict members to admit and care for patients only in conjunction with a physician holding independent privileges. Members holding dependent privileges are responsible for obtaining the involvement of appropriate members with independent privileges in their admissions and inpatient care. Dependent privileges alone do not render the member ineligible for any category or affect ability to vote, serve on committees or hold office.]

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229 Effective January 1, 2008, JC standard MS.08.01.01, Element of Performance 1 calls for “A period of focused professional practice evaluation is implemented for all initially requested privileges.” Among the options for focused professional practice evaluation includes proctoring, which AMA policy supports for initial members, as follows: “AMA policy states that clinical proctoring is an important tool for education and the evaluation of clinical competence of new physicians seeking privileges or existing medical staff members requesting new privileges. Therefore, the AMA: (1) encourages hospital medical staffs to develop proctoring programs, with appropriate medical staff bylaws provisions, to evaluate the clinical competency of new physicians seeking privileges and existing medical staff members requesting new privileges; and (2) encourages hospital medical staffs to consider including the following provisions in their medical staff bylaws for use in their proctoring program: (a) Except as otherwise determined by the medical executive committee, all initial appointees to the medical staff and all members granted new clinical privileges shall be subject to a period of proctoring. (b) Each appointee or recipient of new clinical privileges shall be assigned to a department where performance of an appropriate number of cases as established by the medical executive committee, or the department as designee of the medical executive committee, shall be observed by the chair of the department, or the chair's designee, during the period of proctoring specified in the department's rules and regulations, to determine the suitability to continue to exercise the clinical privileges granted in that department. The exercise of clinical privileges in any other department shall also be subject to direct observation by that department's chair or the chair's designee. (c) The members shall remain subject to such proctoring until the medical executive committee has been furnished with: a report signed by the chair of the department(s) to which the member is assigned as well as other department(s) in which the appointee may exercise clinical privileges, describing the types and numbers of cases observed and the evaluation of the applicant's performance, a statement that the applicant appears to meet all of the qualifications for unsupervised practice in that department, has discharged all of the responsibilities of staff membership, and has not exceeded or abused the prerogative of the category to which the appointment was made, and that the member has satisfactorily demonstrated the ability to exercise the clinical privileges initially granted in those departments.” AMA Policy Compendium H-375.974

230 Limited privileges may be used as a means of permitting community physicians whose practice does not or no longer includes inpatient care to maintain medical staff membership, contact with their hospitalized patients, and a connection with hospitalists or other medical staff members who are treating their patients while hospitalized.
1. **Admitting Privileges**

Privileges to admit patients to the hospital must be specifically requested and are granted only to qualified requestors meeting the clinical criteria for admitting privileges recommended by departments to the Medical Executive Committee. Admitting privileges are not exclusive to hospital employees, members with hospital contracts, or to any single specialty. 

2. **Contract Privileges**

Medical staff members may provide services under contract with the hospital subject to the following conditions.

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231 "The AMA believes that hospital admitting privileges should be granted in accordance with state law and in accordance with criteria for standards of medical care established by the individual hospital medical staff.” AMA Policy Compendium H-230.992

232 "The governing body shall appoint members of the medical staff within a reasonable period of time after considering the recommendations of the medical staff, if any, and shall ensure the following: That every inpatient is under the care of a qualified member of the medical staff;” Georgia Regulations. 290-9-7-.09 (b).

233 To address the concern that hospitalists might become the only ones permitted to admit.
a) A member providing services pursuant to a hospital contract, exclusive or otherwise, must qualify for and be granted clinical privileges and satisfy the same medical staff membership qualifications in the same manner, and must fulfill all of the obligations of the appropriate membership category, as any other applicant or medical staff member. 235

b) Prior to the issuing of any new or renewed exclusive contract, the Medical Executive Committee must review the quality of care ramifications of continued exclusivity or of imposition of exclusivity on any department/service or privileges and make a recommendation to the Board as to whether exclusivity is appropriate. 236 The Medical Executive Committee shall collect information from the members of medical specialties that would be affected, from the hospital administration, and from other interested parties, in order to make an informed recommendation; 237 however, the actual terms of the contract and any financial information related to the contract, including but not limited to the remuneration to be paid to medical staff members under contract, are not relevant and therefore shall neither be disclosed to the Medical Executive Committee nor discussed as part of this exclusive contracting evaluation process. 238

c) No privileges will be terminated, restricted, or reduced by operation of any hospital contract for any reason without the same rights of hearing and appeal as are available to all members of the medical staff. 239

234 Georgia courts have upheld hospital contracts limiting specified services to contracting professionals in Cobb County Kennestone Hospital Authority and St Mary’s Hospital, among other cases, but have also recognized, in Whitaker v. Houston County Hospital Authority, as “well-established law” that the hospital’s ability to enter into exclusive contracts is not unlimited. Rather, according to the St Mary’s decision, “to ensure its right to terminate staff privileges to maintain exclusive relationships, hospitals must so provide either in the bylaws or in a contract with the individual physician (and not just in the contracts with the physician’s professional corporation).”

235 Georgia regulation 290-9-7-.11(a)1 states, “Any physician, podiatrist, or dentist providing patient care, whether directly or by contract with the hospital, shall obtain clinical privileges through the hospital’s medical staff credentialing process.”

236 Element of Performance 2 for JC standard LD.04.03.09 states, “The medical staff advises the hospital’s leaders on the sources of clinical services to be provided by consultation, contractual arrangements, or other agreements.”

237 “The AMA believes that the medical staff should review and make recommendations to the governing body related to exclusive contract arrangements, prior to any decision being made, in the following situations: (1) the decision to execute an exclusive contract in a previously open department or service; (2) the decision to renew or otherwise modify an exclusive contract in a particular department or service; (3) the decision to terminate an exclusive contract in a particular department or service; and (4) prior to termination of the contract the medical staff should hold a hearing, as defined by the medical staff and hospital to permit interested parties to express their views on the hospital's proposed action.” AMA Policy Compendium H-225.985

238 Clarification that the financial ramifications including pay scale is not under review by the medical staff. The medical staff organization is responsible for the quality of patient care and is neither qualified nor authorized to make financial decisions. Any evaluation that is not relevant to quality will not be protected under peer review law.

239 Failure to provide hearing rights to all physicians and dentists against whom an action based on quality patient care is recommended unnecessarily risks eligibility for federal peer review protection under the HCQIA. Under Whitaker v. Houston and St. Mary’s Hospital, if the bylaws or the physician’s individual
3. **Dentists’ And Podiatrists’ Privileges**

   a) Admitting and other clinical privileges of dentists and podiatrists may not exceed the scope of their licensure;

   b) Patients admitted by dentists and podiatrists must receive all necessary and appropriate medical evaluations and care;

   c) Any dispute between a dentist or podiatrist and a physician member regarding proposed treatment must be promptly resolved by the department director [president].

4. **Disaster Privileges**

   a) **Conditions**

   Disaster privileges may be granted only when the hospital cannot meet immediate patient needs and the hospital disaster plan has been activated. Individuals with disaster privileges shall be identified as described in hospital disaster plan. The department [medical staff ] rules and regulations delineate supervision responsibilities over disaster privileges holders and all matters relating to the exercise of disaster privileges.

   b) **Circumstances**

   The president or his/her designees, may, on a case-by-case basis, grant disaster privileges but only upon presentation of a valid picture identification issued by a state, or federal agency and any of the following:  

   (1) A current Hospital picture identification that clearly identifies professional designation;

   (2) A current license to practice;

   (3) Primary source verification of the license;

   (4) Identification establishing that the individual is a member of a Disaster Medical Assistance Team (DMAT), MRC, ESAR-VHP, or other state or federal organizations or groups;

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contract do not specifically waive hearing rights, adverse contract-related actions warrant hearing rights as provided in medical staff bylaws for non-contract adverse actions. Providing for hearing rights in the medical staff bylaws protects all involved.

240 To meet Element of Performance 1 for JC Standard EM.02.02.13, “The hospital grants disaster privileges to volunteer licensed independent practitioners only when the Emergency Operations Plan has been activated and the hospital is unable to meet immediate patient needs.”

241 The individual responsible for granting disaster privileges is identified in the bylaws to comply with JC standard EM.02.02.13 Element of Performance 2.

242 As called for by Element of Performance 5 of JC standard EM.02.02.13.
(5) Identification granted by a federal, state or municipal entity establishing that the individual has been granted authority to render patient care, treatment, and services in disaster circumstances;

(6) Identification by current hospital staff or medical staff member(s) with personal knowledge regarding the volunteer’s ability to act as a licensed independent practitioner during a disaster.

c) Verification

Primary source verification of the credentials of individuals with disaster privileges is a high priority and is initiated as soon as the immediate situation is under control. Verification and determination as to continuation of privileges are completed within 72 hours from the time the volunteer practitioner presents to the organization. 243

5. Emergency Privileges244

In case of emergency in which serious permanent harm or aggravation of injury or disease could result to a patient, or in which the life of a patient is in immediate danger, any medical staff member with clinical privileges shall be permitted, and the hospital staff will assist, to provide appropriate care within the scope of the member’s license. Any and all implementation of emergency privileges shall be subsequently reviewed by the Credentials Committee.

6. History and Physical Privileges245

Every patient receives a history and physical within twenty-four hours of admission, unless a previous history and physical performed within thirty days of admission is on record, in which case that history and physical will be updated within twenty-four hours of admission. 246 Every patient admitted for surgery must have a history and physical within 24 hours prior to surgery, unless a previous history and physical performed within thirty days prior to the surgery is on record, in which case that history and physical will

243 As called for by Elements of Performance 7 and 8 of JC standard EM.02.02.13.
244 “The medical staff shall establish a system for the approval of temporary or emergency staff privileges when needed.” Georgia Regulation 290-9-7-.11(a) 4
245 JC standard MS 03.01.01, Element of Performance 8 states, “The medical staff requires that a practitioner who has been granted privileges by the hospital to do so performs a patient’s medical history and physical examination and required updates.”
246 Under pending JC Standard MS 01.01.01, Element of Performance 16, “The medical staff bylaws include the following: The requirements for completing and documenting medical histories and physical examinations. The medical history and physical examination are completed and documented by a physician, an oromaxillofacial surgeon, or other qualified licensed individual in accordance with state law and hospital policy.” Georgia regulation 290-9-7-.19(a)1 states, “A history and physical examination shall be completed within the first twenty-four (24) hours after admission. A history and physical examination completed by either the patient’s physician or the appropriate practitioner operating under the direction of the physician as authorized by law no more than thirty (30) days prior to the admission may be accepted but must be updated to reflect the patient’s condition at the time of admission. Where the patient is admitted solely for oromaxillofacial surgery, such history and physical may be completed by the oromaxillofacial surgeon.”
be updated within twenty-four hours of the surgery. Only those granted privileges to do so conduct history and physicals or update histories and physicals. Privileges to conduct a history and physical or an update to a history and physical are granted only to:

   a) Physicians

Privileges to conduct or update histories and physicals for patients admitted solely for oral/maxillofacial surgery, consistent with the time requirements stated in this section, may be granted to qualified physicians who are members of the medical staff or seeking temporary privileges.

   b) Oral/maxillofacial surgeons

Privileges to conduct or update histories and physicals only for those patients admitted solely for oral/maxillofacial surgery, consistent with the time requirements stated in this section may be granted to qualified oral/maxillofacial surgeons who are members of the medical staff or seeking temporary privileges.

7. New Privileges

Requests to provide services or perform procedures not currently being provided at the hospital are submitted in writing to the medical staff office, and include a description of the privileges requested and the equipment, space, personnel, and resources required to safely provide the new procedure or services. The department(s) submits a recommendation to the Medical Executive Committee, including criteria for any privilege the department recommends adding. If the Medical Executive Committee supports addition of the service, it shall forward its recommendation to the board for final action. If the board adopts the recommendation, the requestor will be provided the opportunity to apply for the new privilege(s).

8. Telemedicine Privileges

Only those privileges specifically recommended by the Medical Executive Committee to be provided via telemedicine are available at this hospital. Licensed independent practitioners at a different facility (referred to as the “distant site”) who wish to provide services to patients at this hospital via telemedicine link must apply for telemedicine privileges at this hospital.

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247 Georgia regulation 290-9-7-.28 (a)(2) states “The hospital shall have bylaws, rules, or policies and procedures developed by the medical staff which requires that within twenty-four (24) hours prior to surgery either a history and physical examination or an update of a previous history and physical is completed for every surgical patient. Where an update is used, the previous history and physical examination must not have occurred more than thirty (30) days prior to surgery.”

248 “Our AMA believes that the best interests of hospitalized patients are served when admission history and physical exams are performed by a physician, recognizing that portions of the histories and physical exams may be delegated by the physician to others whose credentials are accepted by the medical staff.” AMA Policy Compendium H-215.995

249 Under Georgia regulation 290-9-7-.19(a)1, “…Where the patient is admitted solely for oromaxillofacial surgery, such history and physical may be completed by the oromaxillofacial surgeon.”

250 JC standardMS.13.01.03 states, “the medical staffs at both the originating and distant sites recommend the clinical services to be provided by licensed independent practitioner through a telemedical link at their respective sites.”
9. **Temporary Privileges**

The administrator grants temporary privileges if requested by a practitioner, upon written recommendation of [the department chair where the privileges will be exercised and] the president, only in the following two circumstances and subject to the conditions of this section.

**a) Circumstances**

Temporary privileges are only available to pending applicants or to fulfill an important patient need, as described in this section.

**(1) Pending Applications**

Temporary privileges can be granted to applicants who requests them while their applications for initial privileges is awaiting review and approval of the Medical Executive Committee and the board, after verification of the following:

- a) a complete application for medical staff membership and privileges
- b) current licensure
- c) relevant training or experience
- d) current competence
- e) ability to perform the clinical privileges requested
- f) other criteria required by the medical staff bylaws
- g) National Practitioner Data Bank query and evaluation of information received
- h) no current or previously successful challenge to licensure or registration,
- i) no involuntary termination of medical staff membership at any hospital or other entity,
- j) no involuntary limitation, reduction, denial or loss of clinical privileges.

Temporary privileges should not be recommended if a department or the credentials committee has already recommended against a favorable action or there are doubts that the applicant will be granted medical staff membership and privileges by the Board. Temporary privileges shall automatically terminate if the applicant’s initial membership application is withdrawn.

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251 "The medical staff shall establish a system for the approval of temporary or emergency staff privileges when needed." Georgia Regulation 290-9-7-.11(a) 4.

252 JC standard MS.06.01.13 Element of Performance 5 states that temporary privileges are granted on the recommendation of the medical staff president or authorized designee.

253 The Rationale for JC standard MS.06.01.13 states, “there are two circumstances in which temporary privileges may be granted. Each circumstance has different criteria for granting privileges. The circumstances for which the granting of temporary privileges are acceptable include the following: To fulfill an important patient care, treatment, and service need when a new applicant with a complete application that raises no concerns is awaiting review and approval of the medical staff executive committee and the governing body.

254 Each element called for under Element of Performance 3 of JC standard MS.06.01.13.

255 Added to clarify that temporary privileges granted during the pendency of an application cease automatically, should the application be withdrawn.
automatically terminate at the end of the designated period, which shall not exceed 120
days cumulatively.\textsuperscript{256}

\textbf{(2) Patient Care Need}

Temporary privileges can be granted for a period of [90] days \textsuperscript{257} to fulfill an important
patient care, treatment or service\textsuperscript{258} need, such as providing specific medical skills needed
to care for a patient that no one on the medical staff possesses, covering for an absent
medical staff member or otherwise filling in when a medical staff member is not
available to provide the care needed.\textsuperscript{259} After verification of current licensure and current
competence.\textsuperscript{260} The privileges are limited to the specific need that was the basis of the
application. A practitioner requesting temporary privileges more than \textsuperscript{[twice]} in one year
will be required to apply for medical staff membership and privileges or face denial of an
additional round of temporary privileges.

\textbf{b) Conditions}

All persons requesting or receiving temporary privileges shall be bound by the medical
staff bylaws and rules and regulations. If temporary privileges are denied or terminated
for a reportable reason, hearing rights shall apply. \textsuperscript{261}

Requirements for observation, consultation and/or reporting may be imposed by the
department chair responsible for supervision.

\textbf{C. Relinquishing Privileges}\textsuperscript{262}

A medical staff member who wishes to relinquish or limit particular clinical privileges
sends written notice to the [Medical Executive Committee] appropriate department
chair(s) identifying the particular clinical privileges to be relinquished or limited, and to
the medical staff office for inclusion in the member’s credentials file. The request to
relinquish or limit clinical privileges shall be effective immediately on receipt by the
medical staff office unless a later date is specified in the notice.

\textsuperscript{256} The limit established by Element of Performance #6 for JC standard MS.06.01.13.
\textsuperscript{257} Temporary privileges to meet an important patient care need may be granted for a period of time
defined in the medical staff bylaws” under JC standard MS.06.01.13 Element of Performance 1.
\textsuperscript{258} As stated in the rationale for JC standard MS.06.01.13.
\textsuperscript{259} The standards no longer mention “locum tenens” but if the bylaws provide for granting temporary
privileges to meet the important patient need caused by a physician’s absence, locum tenens should be
accommodated.
\textsuperscript{260} As called for by Element of Performance #2 for JC standard MS.06.01.13.
\textsuperscript{261} Under the HCQIA, any decision adversely affecting privileges of any kind for more than thirty days
should give rise to hearing rights to qualify for federal immunity protection.
\textsuperscript{262} To provide a means for members to surrender privileges on their own terms for their own reasons.
For purposes of this article, the term member means a medical staff member or other practitioner providing services provided under privileges granted by the hospital. All members shall participate in peer review activities as requested or appointed pursuant to these bylaws in good faith, consistent with state and federal legal standards.

A. Ongoing and Focused Peer Review Standards

[The peer review committee] Each department determines, on a continuing basis, the type of data to collect for use in ongoing professional practice evaluation and the criteria to be used for focused peer review of a member or other practitioner’s services provided under privileges held in the department, whenever quality patient care issues are identified. The Medical Executive Committee is responsible for consistent use of criteria in peer review. The results of ongoing and focused peer review are the bases for decisions regarding membership and privileges. Only those peer review standards adopted by the Medical Executive Committee shall be used in evaluating members.

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263 Under Georgia Regulations, “Peer review means the procedure by which professional health care providers evaluate the quality and efficiency of services ordered or performed by other professional health care providers in the hospital for the purposes of fostering safe and adequate treatment of the patients and compliance with standards set by an association of health care providers and with the laws, rules, and regulations applicable to hospitals.” Georgia Reg.290-9-7m.

264 Under the HCQIA, peer review actions meeting its “standards for professional review actions” qualify for federal peer review immunity protection. The HCQIA standards are that the peer review action “must be taken (1) in the reasonable belief that the action was in the furtherance of quality health care, (2) after a reasonable effort to obtain the facts of the matter, (3) after adequate notice and hearing procedures are afforded to the physician involved or after such other procedures as are fair to the physician under the circumstances, and (4) in the reasonable belief that the action was warranted by the facts known after such reasonable effort to obtain facts and after meeting the requirement of paragraph (3).” Georgia Code section 31-7-141 places conditions on state law immunity as follows: “There shall be no monetary liability on the part of and no cause of action for damages shall arise against any member of a duly appointed medical review committee for any act or proceeding undertaken or performed within the scope of the functions of any such committee if the committee member acts without malice or fraud. This immunity shall apply only to actions by providers of health services, and in no way shall this Code section render any medical review committee immune from any action in tort or contract brought by a patient or his successors or assigns. This Code section shall not affect the immunity of an officer or an employee of a public corporation.” Under Patrick v. Floyd and Patton v. St. Francis Hospital, the HCQIA preempts or trumps the Georgia statute’s malice exemption.

265 JC Standard MS.08.01.01 states, “The organized medical staff defines the circumstances requiring monitoring and evaluation of a practitioner’s professional performance.”

266 As called for by JC standard 08.01.03, Element of Performance 2, which states, “The type of data to be collected is determined by individual departments and approved by the organized medical staff.”

267 Implementing Georgia regulation (c)14 which states that the bylaws, rules and regulations include at a minimum “A mechanism for peer review of the quality of patient care, which includes, but is not limited to, the investigation of reportable patient incidents involving patient care . . . ” and JC standard MS.08.01.01, “the organized medical staff develops criteria to be used for evaluating the performance of practitioners when issues affecting the provision of safe, high quality patient care are identified.”

268 Under Element of Performance 4 of JC standard MS.08.01.01, “focused professional practice evaluation is consistently implemented in accordance with the criteria and requirements defined by the organized medical staff.” The medical executive committee is well positioned to see that all peer review recommendations uniformly utilize the criteria that the medical executive committee has defined.

269 Implementing Element of Performance 3, JC MS standard.08.01.03, “Information resulting from the
B. Behavior Adversely Affecting Patient Care

Behavior by medical staff members while on hospital property that generates a complaint by another medical staff member, a member of the hospital clinical or administrative staff, or individuals in contact with the medical staff member at the hospital other than patients, will be responded to exclusively according to these bylaws.

1. Definition of Behavior Adversely Affecting Patient Care

Inappropriate conduct, or other forms of offensive behavior by a medical staff member which jeopardizes quality patient care or the ability of others to provide quality patient care at the hospital, or threatens, or constitutes verbal, physical or visual abuse of,

ongoing professional practice evaluation is used to determine whether to continue, limit, or revoke any existing privilege(s).”

270 To limit peer review to standards adopted by peers rather than imposed by third party payors or the hospital.

271 AMA Council on Ethics and Judicial Affairs Opinion E-9.045 states, “This Opinion is limited to the conduct of individual physicians and does not refer to physicians acting as a collective, which is considered separately in Opinion 9.025, “Collective Action and Patient Advocacy.” (1) Personal conduct, whether verbal or physical, that negatively affects or that potentially may negatively affect patient care constitutes disruptive behavior. (This includes but is not limited to conduct that interferes with one’s ability to work with other members of the health care team.) However, criticism that is offered in good faith with the aim of improving patient care should not be construed as disruptive behavior. (2) Each medical staff should develop and adopt bylaw provisions or policies for intervening in situations where a physician’s behavior is identified as disruptive. The medical staff bylaw provisions or policies should contain procedural safeguards that protect due process. Physicians exhibiting disruptive behavior should be referred to a medical staff wellness committee. (3) In developing policies that address physicians with disruptive behavior, attention should be paid to the following elements: (a) Clearly stating principal objectives in terms that ensure high standards of patient care and promote a professional practice and work environment. (b) Describing the behavior or types of behavior that will prompt intervention. (c) Providing a channel through which disruptive behavior can be reported and appropriately recorded. A single incident may not be sufficient for action, but each individual report may help identify a pattern that requires intervention. (d) Establishing a process to review or verify reports of disruptive behavior. (e) Establishing a process to notify a physician whose behavior is disruptive that a report has been made, and providing the physician with an opportunity to respond to the report. (f) Including means of monitoring whether a physician’s disruptive conduct improves after intervention. (g) Providing for evaluative and corrective actions that are commensurate with the behavior, such as self-correction and structured rehabilitation. Suspension of responsibilities or privileges should be a mechanism of final resort. Additionally, institutions should consider whether the reporting requirements of Opinion 9.031, “Reporting Impaired, Incompetent, or Unethical Colleagues,” apply in particular cases. (h) Identifying which individuals will be involved in the various stages of the process, from reviewing reports to notifying physicians and monitoring conduct after intervention. (i) Providing clear guidelines for the protection of confidentiality. (j) Ensuring that individuals who report physicians with disruptive behavior are duly protected. (I, II, VIII) Issued December 2000 based on the report "Physicians With Disruptive Behavior," adopted June 2000. AMA Policy Compendium E-9.045

272 The behavior of members outside the hospital need not be regulated by the medical staff; however, behavior in the hospital parking garage or on the lawn should be included.

273 Problems between the member and his/her patient are addressed by the standards applicable to the physician (or other professional)/patient relationship.

274 clarification that while other Codes of Conduct may be established by the hospital to govern its employees or contractors, medical staff members shall be governed solely by these terms.
patients or others involved with providing patient care at the hospital\textsuperscript{275} is disruptive behavior\textsuperscript{276} prohibited by these bylaws. Verbal, visual or physical abuse directed against any individual (e.g., against another medical staff member, house staff, hospital employees or patients) on the basis of race, religion, color, national origin, ancestry, physical disability, mental disability, medical disability, age, marital status, sex or sexual orientation will be considered harassment. Unwelcome sexual advances, requests for sexual favors, or verbal, visual or physical activity through which submission to sexual advances is made an explicit or implicit condition of employment or future employment-related decisions, unwelcome conduct of a sexual nature which has the purpose or effect of unreasonably interfering with a person’s work performance or which creates an offensive, intimidating or otherwise hostile work environment is sexual harassment.\textsuperscript{277} Nothing in this section or these Bylaws is intended to prohibit acceptable behavior, which includes constructive criticism, patient advocacy, exercise of rights granted under these bylaws, fair competition, or pursuit of business interests by practitioners.

2. Referral for Assistance

Behavior that indicates that the medical staff member suffers from a physical, mental or emotional condition will be referred to the medical staff wellness committee or otherwise evaluated to promote assisting the medical staff member while protecting others.\textsuperscript{279}

3. Severity Levels

To aid in responding appropriately to a complaint, behavior adversely affecting patient care is classified here into three levels of severity. Level I behavior is the most severe violation. Any corrective action will be commensurate with the nature and severity of the behavior.

Level I: Physical violence or other physical abuse which is directed at people; sexual harassment or harassment involving physical contact.

\textsuperscript{275} The behavior to be addressed by the medical staff has to fall within the purview of the medical staff organization—professionalism and patient care quality. If the behavior is not related to patient care or professional ethics, the legal protections provided for peer review are not likely to apply. To qualify as a medical review committee and the protections afforded such committees, the committee must be formed “to evaluate and improve the quality of health care rendered by providers of health service or to determine that health services rendered were professionally indicated or were performed in compliance with the applicable standard of care or that the cost of health care rendered was considered reasonable by the providers of professional health services in the area, “ under GA Code Section 31-7-140. Implementing that definition, GA Code section 31-7-141 bars monetary liability and causes of action for damages arising from such a committee’s action, if the committee acts in good faith, and GA code section 31-7-143 protects such committee’s records and proceedings from discovery. The confidentiality protections apply to qualified committees even if the activities are marred by malice. \textit{Patton v. St. Francis Hospital et al.}.

\textsuperscript{276} Joint Commission standard LD 03.01.01, Element of Performance 4 calls for the code of conduct to “define acceptable, disruptive and inappropriate conduct.”

\textsuperscript{277} Based on federal law prohibiting sexual harassment.

\textsuperscript{278} Joint Commission standard LD 03.01.01, Element of Performance 4 calls for the code of conduct to “define acceptable, disruptive and inappropriate conduct.”

\textsuperscript{279} The well-being of the medical staff member is a concern that must be preserved in the context of protecting those interacting with the member.
Level II: Verbal abuse such as unwarranted\(^{280}\) yelling, swearing or cursing; threatening, humiliating, sexual or otherwise inappropriate comments directed at a person or persons verbally; visual abuse such as threatening, humiliating, sexual or otherwise inappropriate writing or picture(s) directed at a person or persons, or physical violence or abuse directed in anger at an inanimate object; repeat offenses.

Level III: Verbal abuse which is directed at-large, but has been reasonably perceived by a witness to be disruptive behavior as defined above imposing burdensome, idiosyncratic requirements on nursing staff, residents or others which are not generally accepted in the medical profession and which, in light of the particular circumstances, cannot be reasonably expected to result in improved patient care or significant administrative efficiency.

4. Evaluating Behavior Adversely Affecting Patient Care

Behavior by members of the medical staff that affects or may affect patient care, or refusal of members to cooperate with the disruptive behavior procedures, may result in corrective action, which shall be carried out according to the medical staff bylaws.

Behavior by members of the medical staff which has no impact on patient care, and therefore does not meet the threshold requirements for resolution under this bylaws section but constitutes violence or harassment as described under hospital human resources policies, may be resolved by administrative action as described below.\(^{281}\)

Repeated instances of behavior that adversely affects patient care will be considered cumulatively and action shall be taken accordingly.

a) Medical Staff Behavior Complaint Process

Complaints about a medical staff member’s behavior must be in writing, signed and directed to the Medical Executive Committee. The president shall provide the complainant with a written acknowledgement of the complaint and the bylaws or those sections of the bylaws addressing conduct, and shall appoint a review subcommittee [of two] to review the complaint immediately. The committee and the president shall make an initial determination of authenticity\(^{282}\) and severity, and act accordingly. In all cases, the member involved shall be provided with a copy of these bylaws and a copy of the complaint.\(^{283}\) [The president may initially protect the identity of the complainant if, in his/her judgment, such protection is appropriate and does not prevent the member from adequately defending himself/herself against the allegations.] Requests by a complainant that "nothing should be done" about an event and that the report is "for information only" cannot be granted.

Complaints will be processed according to the level of severity assigned:

\(^{280}\) Recognizing that in emergency situations, calling out for instruments, drugs, or help may actually be appropriate.

\(^{281}\) Action by medical staff members that do not affect patient care should not go without response, but are outside the medical staff’s scope.

\(^{282}\) To screen out false reports. Element of Performance 6 for JC standard MS. 11.01.01 states that the process should address “evaluation of the credibility of a complaint, allegation or concern.”

\(^{283}\) To permit the accused member to prepare a meaningful response.
**Level I:** The committee interviews the complainant, any witnesses and the medical staff member within 24 hours of receiving the complaint.

**Level II:** The committee interviews the complainant, any witnesses and the medical staff member within 5 working days of receiving the complaint.

**Level III:** The committee interviews the complainant, any witnesses and the medical staff member within 10 days of receiving the complaint.

Subsequent to this fact-gathering, the committee shall recommend one or more of the following actions to the Medical Executive Committee:

1. take no action against the member based on a finding that the behavior was not inappropriate;
2. issue a warning;
3. refer the member to the medical staff well-being committee;
4. recommend corrective action pursuant to the medical staff bylaws.

Any corrective action will be commensurate with the nature and severity of the member’s behavior.

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**b) Behavior Complaints Not Handled By Medical Staff Behavior Complaint Process**

Threatening, harassing or other offensive behavior which is directed against a medical staff member by a hospital employee, board member, contractor, or other member of the hospital community shall be reported by the member to the hospital pursuant to hospital policy governing conduct. Behavior by a medical staff member towards a hospital employee, board member, contractor or other member of the hospital community, which does not fall within the definition of, behavior adversely affecting patient care above, but violates hospital policy governing conduct, shall be dealt with according to that hospital policy, so long as the hospital policy has been approved by the Medical Executive Committee.

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**C. External Peer Review**

External peer review will take place as part of focused review, investigation, application processing, or at any other time only under the following circumstances, if and only if:

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284 To ensure that medical staff members are protected against disruptive behavior.

285 It is necessary that the medical executive committee screen and approve the hospital policy to prevent the hospital policy from conflicting with or circumventing the medical staff policy. Nonetheless, the hospital must be permitted to take the action it needs to take to respond to medical staff member sexually harassing a gift shop worker, which is outside the patient-care related behavior covered by this medical staff policy.

286 Circumstances requiring evaluation of a professional’s performance must be defined for compliance with JC MS.08.01.01. Focused professional practice evaluation processes include external peer review, which should be addressed in medical staff bylaws to promote fair and uniform deployment. External review can also be useful for other medical staff evaluation such as application processing.
deemed appropriate by the relevant medical staff department, the Medical Executive Committee or the board:

- Vague or conflicting recommendations from committee or department review(s) where conclusions from this review could directly and adversely affect an individual’s membership or privileges.
- Lack of internal expertise, in that no one on the medical staff has adequate expertise in the clinical procedure or area under review.
- When the medical staff needs an expert witness for a fair hearing, for evaluation of a credentials file or for assistance in developing a benchmark for quality monitoring.
- To promote impartiality in peer review.

A member subject to review or investigation can request the hospital or medical staff to obtain external peer review, and shall have an opportunity to reasonably object to the selection of a particular external peer reviewer.

D. Investigation

1. Authority

The Medical Executive Committee has the exclusive authority to initiate an investigation involving a member, and shall do so when reliable information indicates a member’s actions may be detrimental to patients, unethical, contrary to the medical staff bylaws and rules and regulations, or below applicable professional standards, or is otherwise reportable under state regulations as a patient incident. The Medical Executive Committee or the board shall take action in accordance with the requirements and procedures set forth in this policy.

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287 Georgia regulation 290-9-.07(2)(a) defines Patient Incidents Requiring Report and requires reporting and investigation, as follows:

1. The hospital’s duly constituted peer review committee(s) shall report to the Department, as required below, whenever any of the following incidents involving hospital patients occurs or the hospital has reasonable cause to believe that a reportable incident involving a hospital patient has occurred:
   (i) Any unanticipated patient death not related to the natural course of the patient’s illness or underlying condition;
   (ii) Any rape which occurs in a hospital;
   (iii) Any surgery on the wrong patient or the wrong body part of the patient; and
   (iv) Effective three (3) months after the Department provides written notification to all hospitals the hospital’s duly constituted peer review committee(s) shall also report to the Department, whenever any of the following incidents involving hospital patients occurs or the hospital has reasonable cause to believe that a reportable incident involving a hospital patient has occurred:
      (I) Any patient injury which is unrelated to the patient’s illness or underlying condition and results in a permanent loss of limb or function;
      (II) Second or third degree burns involving twenty (20) percent or more of the body surface of an adult patient or fifteen (15) percent or more of the body surface of a child which burns were acquired by the patient in the hospital;
      (III) Serious injury to a patient resulting from the malfunction or intentional or accidental misuse of patient care equipment;
      (IV) Discharge of an infant to the wrong family;
      (V) Any time an inpatient, or a patient under observation status, cannot be located, where there are circumstances that place the health, safety, or welfare of the patient or others at risk and the patient has been missing for more than eight (8) hours; and
      (VI) Any assault on a patient, which results in an injury that requires treatment.

2. The hospital’s peer review committee(s) shall make the self-report of the incident within twenty-four hours of the incident occurring or having been reasonably discovered.
Committee may also initiate investigation if it determines that a request for corrective action or other report resulting from the medical staff behavior complaint process, from ongoing professional practice evaluation, external peer review, focused review or any other peer review or quality improvement process warrants investigation.

At all times the Medical Executive Committee retains both authority and discretion to refer the member to the medical staff wellness committee, to terminate an investigation, to impose summary suspension, and/or to take whatever action may be warranted by the circumstances consistent with these bylaws.

2. Procedure

a) Investigating Committee

The Medical Executive Committee conducts the investigation or delegates the investigation to a standing medical staff committee or special medical staff committee appointed for the purpose of conducting the investigation. The Medical Executive Committee sends special notice to the member that an investigation is being conducted and extending the opportunity to provide information in a manner and upon such terms as the investigating committee deems appropriate. The individual or body investigating the matter may in its discretion interview the member but an investigating committee

(24) hours or by the next regular business day from when the hospital has reasonable cause to believe an incident has occurred. The self-report shall be received by the Department in confidence and shall include at least:

(i) The name of the hospital;
(ii) The date of the incident and the date the hospital became aware that a reportable incident may have occurred;
(iii) The medical record number of any affected patient(s);
(iv) The type of reportable incident suspected, with a brief description of the incident; and
(v) Any immediate corrective or preventative action taken by the hospital to ensure against the replication of the incident prior to the completion of the hospital’s investigation.

3. The hospital’s peer review committee(s) shall conduct an investigation of any of the incidents listed above and complete and retain on site a written report of the results of the investigation within forty-five (45) days of the discovery of the incident. The complete report of the investigation shall be available to the Department for inspection at the facility and shall contain at least:

(i) An explanation of the circumstances surrounding the incident, including the results of a root cause analysis or other systematic analysis;
(ii) Any findings or conclusions associated with the review; and
(iii) A summary of any actions taken to correct identified problems associated with the incident and to prevent recurrence of the incident and also any changes in procedures or practices resulting from the internal evaluation using the hospital’s peer review and quality management processes.

4. The Department shall hold the self-report made through the hospital’s peer review committee(s) concerning a reportable patient incident in confidence as a peer review document or report and not release the self-report to the public. However, where the Department determines that a rule violation related to the reported patient incident has occurred, the Department will initiate a separate complaint investigation of the incident. The Department’s complaint investigation and the Department’s report of any rule violation(s) arising either from the initial self-report received from the hospital or an independent source shall be public records.

288 Such a committee should qualify as a “medical review committee” and the attendant protections under Georgia law, consistent with Georgia Code Sec. 31-7-140.
interview is not a hearing and does not entitle the member to any procedural rights. The investigating committee prepares a written report of the investigation to the Medical Executive Committee within the time frame set by the Medical Executive Committee. The report may include recommendations for action.

b) Result of Investigation

In a timely manner, at the conclusion of the investigation, [but in any event within 60 days after receipt of the request or allegation,] [unless deferred by the Medical Executive Committee for good cause] the Medical Executive Committee

(I) Determines that the allegation was not substantiated or otherwise determines that no further action is warranted, and closes the investigation.289 If appropriate, the Medical Executive Committee determines that any reference to the investigation shall be removed from the medical staff member’s file;

(2) Defers action, for a reasonable time, for good cause;

(3) Refers the member [to the medical staff wellness committee] for evaluation and/or therapy;

(4) Takes corrective action consistent with these bylaws.

The Medical Executive Committee shall provide special notice of the conclusions and recommendation to the affected medical staff member.

E. Corrective Actions290

Based on an investigation, the medical staff behavior complaint process, reports or requests from medical staff departments or committees or on otherwise reliable information that a member’s actions are detrimental to patients, unethical, contrary to the medical staff bylaws and rules and regulations, or below applicable professional standards, the Medical Executive Committee

• Issues a warning, letter of admonition or letter of reprimand;

• Recommends supervision291 or mandatory consultation for a stated period of time or number of cases;

289 The federal appellate case, John Doe, MD v Leavitt, points up the need to identify that an investigation has been formally closed, short of final action by the board.

290 Georgia Regulations provide that “The medical staff shall review and, when appropriate, recommend to the governing body denial, limitation, suspension, or revocation of the privileges of any practitioner who does not practice in compliance with the scope of privileges, the medical staff bylaws, rules and regulations, generally accepted standards of practice, or hospital policies and procedures.” Georgia Regulations 290-9-7-11 (b)4. Further, pending Joint Commission standard MS 01.01.01, Element of Performance 33 calls for the medical staff bylaws to include, “The process for recommending termination or suspension of medical staff membership and/or termination, suspension, or reduction of clinical privileges.”.

291 “Our AMA policy states that medical staff supervision refers to the imposition, usually involuntary and
• Recommends reduction, suspension or revocation of clinical privileges;

• Recommends suspension or revocation of medical staff membership;

• Takes other corrective actions as warranted by the facts.

1. Summary suspension

Summary suspension is imposed by a medical staff authority to immediately suspend the privilege(s) and/or membership involved until further notice. The subject is provided special notice immediately.

a) Basis

Summary suspension of any or all privileges and/or medical staff membership can be imposed only if necessary to prevent imminent danger to the health of an individual. Summary suspension is not imposed to punish past conduct. Summary suspension is peer review activity, which may or may not lead to a final adverse action, but is not itself a final peer review action.

usually subsequent to an adverse event, of significant consultation, oversight, or close monitoring of a physician who has privileges and whose clinical competence, cognitive skills, procedural skills, or outcomes have been questioned. Supervision usually is limited to particular competencies under question and may apply to any site of service.” AMA Policy Compendium H-375.968. Further, “Our AMA advocates that the conduct of medical staff supervision be included in medical staff bylaws and be guided by the following principles: (1) Physicians serving as medical staff supervisors should be indemnified at the facility’s expense from malpractice claims and other litigation arising out of the supervision function. (2) Physicians being supervised should be indemnified at the facility’s expense for any damages that might occur as a result of implementing interventions recommended by medical staff supervisors. (3) AMA principles of peer review as found in Policies H-320.968 [2,d], H-285.998 [5], and H-320.982 [2c,d] should be adhered to in the conduct of medical staff supervision. (4) The medical staff member serving as supervisor should be determined through a formal process by the department chair or medical staff executive committee. (5) The scope of the medical staff supervision should be limited to the provision of services that have been restricted, are clearly questionable, or are under question, as determined by the department chair or medical staff executive committee. (6) The duration of the medical staff supervision should be limited to the amount of time necessary to adequately assess the degree of clinical competence in the area of skill being assessed. (7) Medical staff supervision should include a sufficient volume of procedures or admissions for meaningful assessment. (8) Medical staff supervisors should provide periodic performance reports on each patient to the appropriate designated medical staff committee. The reports should be transcribed or transcribed by the medical staff office to assure confidentiality. The confidentiality of medical staff supervision reports must be strictly maintained. (9) Physicians whose performance is supervised should have access to the performance reports submitted by medical staff supervisors and should be given the opportunity to comment on the contents of the reports. “ AMA Policy Compendium H-375.967.

Pending JC standard MS 01.01.01 Element of Performance 32 states the medical staff bylaws must also include “the process for summary suspension of a practitioner’s medical staff membership or clinical privileges.”

Pending JC standard MS 01.01.01 Element of Performance 30 states the medical staff bylaws must also include “indications for recommending termination or suspension of medical staff membership, and/or termination, suspension, or reduction of clinical privileges.”

The HCQIA extends federal immunity to summary suspensions that are carried out to prevent imminent danger to individuals.
b) Authority

The president, president-elect, the secretary, the treasurer, [the secretary-treasurer], and
the chair(s) of the department(s) in which the member has privileges each has authority to
summarily suspend all or any portion of the privileges of a member.

c) Medical Executive Committee Action

As soon as practicable but within three days after a summary suspension is imposed, the
Medical Executive Committee convenes to review the summary suspension, and ratify
the action or terminate or modify the suspension, each of which actions would be
immediately implemented. The Medical Executive Committee may also recommend
such further corrective action as is appropriate to the facts, combine another corrective
action with any remaining summary suspension action, or recommends sanctions that do
not trigger procedural rights. The Medical Executive Committee immediately provides
special notice of its action to the member.

2. Automatic suspension

Automatic suspension is triggered by an objective occurrence identified by these bylaws,
without action by the medical staff, to immediately suspend privilege(s) or membership
effective upon information received by the medical staff office.

a) Basis

(1) Controlled Substances. Any revocation, probation, or suspension of the
member’s registration or certification to prescribe automatically causes a
suspension of the member’s ability to order or prescribe medications in the
hospital.

(2) Failure to Pay Dues. Failure to pay medical staff dues after [two] notices
stating the amount due, and the ramifications of failure to pay dues as of the
fifteenth (15th) day after the date of final notice automatically suspend the
member’s privileges and membership until dues are paid.

(3) License. Any revocation, probation, or suspension of the member’s
license to practice automatically suspends the member’s privileges and
membership.

(4) Medical Record Delinquency. Failure to complete medical records
according to the schedule established in the medical staff rules and
regulations generates a written [electronic][telephonic] warning that failure

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295 Pending JC standard MS.01.01.01 Element of Performance 31 states that the medical staff bylaws must
also include “the process for automatic suspension of a practitioner’s medical staff membership or clinical
privileges.”

296 Pending JC standard MS.01.01.01 Element of Performance 28 states that medical staff bylaws must
include the “indications for automatic suspension of a practitioner’s medical staff membership or clinical
privileges.”

297 Under Georgia regulation 290-9-7-.11 (c)12. Medical staff bylaws, rules and regulations should include
“the requirements for the completion of medical records.”
to complete records will result in automatic suspension of privileges within five days of the notice. The day before suspension will be imposed, the member receives special notice of the date and time automatic suspension will be imposed. Suspension continues until all medical records responsibilities are fulfilled.

(5) Professional Liability Insurance Lapse. Failure to maintain the amount of professional liability insurance as required under these Bylaws will result in automatic suspension of membership, until the member provides verification to the medical staff office of adequate professional liability coverage. The affected member may petition the Medical Executive Committee to allow the suspended practitioner [six months] to provide evidence to the Medical Executive Committee of professional liability coverage in the amount required, or to accept an alternative solution for the loss of insurance.

(6) Current Medicare Sanction Action by the Medicare or other federally funded program will result in the automatic suspension of membership and privileges for the course of the exclusion.

(7) Failure to Attend Department [Section] Meeting After Special Notice Failure by the practitioner to attend a department [section] meeting to which the practitioner has received special notice that the practitioner’s actions will be discussed, as provided in these bylaws, shall result in an automatic suspension of the practitioner’s privileges, which shall remain in effect until the matter is resolved.

b) Medical Executive Committee Action Members may provide the medical staff office information that the underlying cause of the automatic suspension is incorrect which will be considered by the Medical Executive Committee unless the president sooner overturns the suspension based on incontrovertible evidence that the suspension was an error. At its next meeting, the Medical Executive Committee shall review all automatic suspensions occurring since its last meeting and may recommend further corrective action or any action it deems appropriate.

c) Effect of Automatic Suspension If a member is automatically suspended for more than six consecutive months, he or she shall be deemed to have voluntarily resigned medical staff membership and/or the affected privileges. Automatic suspension or limitation does not give rise to procedural rights under these bylaws.

298 Since hospitals are restricted from billing for services ordered or provided by professionals who are excluded by the federally funded programs, members or privileges holders who are excluded during the term of their membership or privileges should be suspended based on the exclusion. 299 Under section II.D.1.b, Special Attendance.  ]
3. Patient Coverage in the Event of Corrective Action

Upon the imposition of a suspension of any kind, or any corrective action that limits the member’s ability to provide care or services to inpatients, the president shall have the authority to provide for alternative coverage of those patients. The wishes of the patients shall be followed in the selection of an alternative member, if possible.

4. Abuse of Process

Threats, retaliation or attempted retaliation by members against complainants will give rise to corrective action pursuant to the medical staff bylaws. Individuals who submit a complaint or complaints which are determined to be false shall be subject to corrective action under the medical staff bylaws or hospital employment policies, whichever applies to the individual.

ARTICLE VII. HEARING AND APPEALS PROCESS

A. INITIATION OF HEARING

1. TRIGGERING EVENTS

a) RECOMMENDATIONS OR ACTIONS: The following recommendations or actions, if recommended or taken by the Medical Executive Committee or proposed to be taken or taken by the board under circumstances in which no prior right to request a hearing existed,301 entitle the respondent to a hearing under timely and proper request.

(1) Denial of initial or renewed medical staff membership;

(2) Suspension of staff membership;

(3) Revocation or reduction of staff membership;

(4) Denial or restriction of requested clinical privileges;

(5) Reduction, summary suspension, restriction, or revocation of clinical privileges;

(6) Imposition of any mandatory concurrent consultation or supervision requirement;

300 Pending Joint Commission standard MS 01.01.01., Element of Performance 34, calls for medical staff bylaws to include “The fair hearing and appeal process (see also Standard MS.10.01.01 regarding the fair hearing and appeal process), which at a minimum shall include:
• The process for scheduling hearings and appeals
• The process for conducting hearings and appeals.”

301 The board may propose an adverse action on an application which has received only favorable action from the medical staff, but the applicant should not be denied hearing rights regarding the proposed final action.
(7) [Restriction or denial of access to the hospital facilities and resources necessary to exercise clinical privileges.]

b) NOTICE OF ADVERSE RECOMMENDATION OR ACTION:

The administrator promptly gives the respondent special notice of an adverse recommendation or action informing the respondent:

(1) Of the recommendation or action, and the reasons for it, including identification of the medical staff bylaw section, rule, regulation or policy allegedly violated, description of the respondent’s alleged acts or omissions, a list by number of the specific or representative patient records in questions and/or the other reason or subject matter forming the basis for the adverse action.;

(2) That the respondent has thirty (30) days after receiving the notice within which to submit a written request for a hearing to the administrator, either in person or by certified or registered mail;

(3) Of the rights related to the hearing available to the respondent pursuant to these bylaws.

c) WAIVER BY FAILURE TO REQUEST A HEARING: A respondent who fails to request a hearing within the time and in the manner here specified waives the right to any hearing or appellate review to which the respondent might otherwise have been entitled. Such waiver applies only to the matters that were the basis for the adverse recommendation or action triggering the notice. The effect of a waiver is as follows:

(1) AFTER ADVERSE RECOMMENDATION BY THE MEDICAL EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE: A waiver of a hearing on the Medical Executive Committee recommendation shall also constitute a respondent waiver of a right to appeal the board’s adoption of that recommendation. The board considers the adverse recommendation as soon as practicable following the waiver. The Board’s action has the following effect:

(a) If the board’s action accords in all respects with the Medical Executive Committee’s recommendations, it shall then become effective as the final decision of the Board.

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302 Clinical privileges are defined in this Model as “authorization to provide care, treatment and services as delineated consistent with these bylaws and includes the right to exercise those privileges in the hospital’s facilities unless specifically restricted by action of these bylaws.” If that definition is not included in medical staff bylaws, this subsection should help to clarify that a hospital action or proposed action that restricts a member from exercising privileges gives rise to hearing rights, consistent with *Satilla v. Bell*.

303 These elements are all to be disclosed in the notice, under the HCQIA hearing standards.
(b) If, on the basis of the same information and material considered by the Medical Executive Committee in formulating its recommendation, the board proposes a different adverse action, then the matter shall be resubmitted to the Medical Executive Committee as a new adverse action, subject to the notice and hearing procedures set forth in these bylaws.


B. HEARING PREREQUISITES

1. NOTICE OF TIME AND PLACE FOR HEARING: Within seven (7) days after receiving a request for hearing, the administrator shall arrange and schedule a hearing, and shall send the respondent special notice of the time, place and date of the hearing, and a list of the witnesses (if any) expected to testify at the hearing. The hearing date shall be not less than thirty (30) nor more than sixty (60) days after the administrator has given special notice to the respondent, unless there are valid reasons for non-receipt of the special notice; in which case the date of the hearing can be extended. A hearing for a respondent who is under suspension must be held not later than twenty-one (21) days after the respondent has been given special notice, if the respondent so request.

2. STATEMENT OF ISSUES AND EVENTS: The notice of hearing must contain a concise statement of the respondent’s alleged acts or omissions, a list by number of the specific or representative patient records in question, and any other reasons or subject matter forming the basis for the adverse action or recommendation which is the subject of the hearing. A list of witnesses expected to testify at the hearing on behalf of the Medical Executive Committee or the board will be included in the notice. The right to the hearing may be forfeited if the respondent fails, without good cause, to appear.

3. APPOINTMENT OF HEARING COMMITTEE:

a) MEDICAL STAFF MEMBERS A hearing occasioned by an adverse recommendation by the Medical Executive Committee or an adverse action by the board is conducted by a hearing committee appointed by the administrator from a list of medical staff members who are not in economic competition with the respondent or otherwise biased against the respondent, provided by the president. The president shall designate one of the members as chairman of the committee.

b) SERVICE ON HEARING COMMITTEE: A medical staff member is not disqualified from serving on a hearing committee solely because of prior knowledge of the facts involved or what the member supposes the facts to be. The member or

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304 Called for by HCQIA hearing standards.
305 The HCQIA hearing standards require thirty days from the notice of the hearing until the commencement of the hearing. While a shorter notice period during suspension is warranted, it must be with the consent of the subject.
306 “Our AMA encourages peer review of the performance of hospital medical staff physicians, which is objective and supervised by physicians. Membership on peer review committees and hearing panels should be open to all physicians on the medical staff and should not be restricted to those physicians who have an exclusive contract with the hospital, salaried physicians, or those on the faculty.” AMA Policy Compendium H-375.990
307 To allow the medical staff input into the membership of the committee while satisfying the HCQIA requirement that the hospital appoint the committee.
members whose adverse recommendation or action initiated the hearing shall not serve on the hearing committee.\textsuperscript{308}

c) VOIR DIRE: The respondent shall have the right to a reasonable opportunity to challenge the impartiality of the hearing committee members and the hearing officer. The hearing officer shall establish the procedure by which this right may be exercised, which may include reasonable requirements that questions be proposed in writing in advance of the hearing and that the questions be presented and responded to by the hearing officer. The hearing officer shall rule on any challenges in accordance with applicable legal principles defining standards of impartiality for hearing panels and hearing officers in proceedings of this type.

C. HEARING PROCEDURE

1. PERSONAL PRESENCE: The personal presence of the respondent is required at the hearing. [A respondent who fails without good cause to appear and proceed at the hearing waives the right to hearing and appeal with the same consequences as provided above regarding waivers.] If the respondent fails without good cause to appear and proceed with the hearing requested, the hearing committee will review the adverse recommendation or decision, as well as any pertinent available information and recommend that the adverse recommendation or decision involved be considered as voluntarily accepted, or recommend that the recommendation be rejected, or that a different corrective action be recommended. If the hearing committee recommends that the adverse recommendation or decision be considered as voluntarily accepted, further hearing and appeal rights are waived, and the recommendation will be forwarded to the Board for final action. If the hearing committee recommends that the recommendation be completely rejected, the Medical Executive Committee will be provided with the opportunity to appeal under the appeal process established by these bylaws. If the hearing committee recommends that a different corrective action be recommended, the recommendation will be treated as a new recommendation for corrective action under these bylaws.

2. PRESIDING OFFICER: The hearing officer, if appointed, or if not appointed, the hearing committee chairman, shall be the presiding officer. If a hearing officer is appointed, the hearing officer, who shall be an attorney-at-law who does not routinely represent the hospital, the respondent or the medical staff, shall be mutually agreed upon by the president in consultation with the Medical Executive Committee, on behalf of the medical staff, and by the administrator, on behalf of the board, and shall be appointed by the administrator on behalf of the board. \textsuperscript{309} The hearing officer may not be in direct economic competition with the practitioner involved.\textsuperscript{310}

\textsuperscript{308}The hearing committee should be comprised of “peers,” that is, medical staff members. To promote the impartiality that is crucial to a fair hearing, the members should not have involvement in the action up to that point.

\textsuperscript{309}To accommodate the HCQIA requirement that the hospital should appoint the hearing officer, while allowing the medical staff to participate in the decision.

\textsuperscript{310}Consistent with HCQIA standards.
The presiding officer shall maintain decorum and assure that all participants have a reasonable opportunity to present relevant oral and documentary evidence. The presiding officer shall determine the order of procedure during the hearing and shall make all rulings on matters of procedure. A hearing officer shall have no vote on the committee, but may participate in the committee deliberations and write the final recommendation and report as directed by the committee.

3. **REPRESENTATION:** The respondent may be accompanied and represented at the hearing by an attorney or by any other person of the respondent’s choice. The Medical Executive Committee or board, depending on whose recommendation or action prompted the hearing, shall appoint an attorney or other individual to represent it.

4. **RIGHTS OF PARTIES:** During a hearing, each party may:

   a) Call and examine witnesses;
   
   b) Introduce exhibits;
   
   c) Cross-examine any witness on any matter relevant to the issues;
   
   d) Impeach any witness;
   
   e) Rebut any evidence

If the respondent does not testify on his or her own behalf, the respondent may be called and examined as if under cross-examination.

5. **PRE-HEARING MEETING:** The presiding officer may require a pre-hearing conference for purposes of document exchange, establishing basic rules concerning the number and type of witnesses who may be called by either party, the length of testimony, role of legal counsel, length of direct and cross-examination, order and length of initial and closing arguments as well as other matters deemed necessary to the conduct of a fair, orderly and efficient hearing process.

6. **PROCEDURE AND EVIDENCE:** The hearing need not be conducted according to rules of law relating to the examination of witnesses or presentation of evidence. Any relevant matter upon which responsible persons might customarily rely in the conduct of serious affairs may be considered regardless of the admissibility of such evidence in a court of law. Each party shall be entitled, prior to or during the hearing, and at the close of the hearing, to submit memoranda which shall become part of the hearing record.

7. **OFFICIAL NOTICE:** In reaching a decision, the hearing committee may take official notice, either before or after submission of the matter for decision, or any

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311 The subject has the right to be represented by an attorney or any other person of the subject’s choice, under HCQIA hearing standards.
312 Under the HCQIA standards, the subject has the right to submit a written statement at the close of hearing also.
generally accepted technical or scientific matter relating to the issues under
consideration and of any facts that may be judicially noticed by the courts of the state
where the hearing is held. Parties present at the hearing must be informed of the
matters to be noticed, and those matters must be noted in the hearing record. Any
party shall be given opportunity, on timely request, to request that a matter be
officially noticed and to refute any official noticed matter by evidence or by written
or oral presentation of authority, in a manner to be determined by the hearing
committee.

8. **BURDEN OF PROOF**[^313] The Medical Executive Committee shall have the
initial duty to present evidence in support of its action or recommendation. The
respondent shall be obligated to present evidence in response. Any member applying
for privileges he or she does not currently hold or an applicant applying for medical
staff membership and privileges shall bear the burden of persuading the hearing
committee, by a preponderance of the evidence, of his or her qualifications by
producing information that allows for adequate evaluation and resolution of
reasonable doubts concerning his or her current qualifications for membership and
privileges. The respondent shall not be permitted to introduce information requested
by the medical staff but not produced during the application process without
establishing that the information could not have been produced previously in the
exercise of reasonable diligence.

Except as provided above, throughout the hearing, the Medical Executive
Committee shall bear the burden of persuading the hearing committee, by a
preponderance of the evidence[^314], that its action or recommendation is
reasonable and warranted. If the evidence on a particular issue is so evenly
balanced that the hearing committee is unable to say that the evidence on
either side preponderates, the hearing committee must find on that issue
against the party who had the burden of proving it. In evaluating the
evidence, the hearing committee should consider all of the evidence bearing
on every issue regardless of which party produced it or had the burden of
proof on the issue.

[^313]: Burden of proof should follow the data; that is, that the applicant, who has more information of his/her
own credentials than the medical staff has, bears the burden of proving competence; but the medical staff,
which must have adverse data to deny a current member’s renewal application, must prove its case.

[^314]: “Preponderance of the evidence” means evidence that has more convincing force than that opposed to
it.
9. **HEARING RECORD:** A record of the hearing shall be made by a court reporter. Transcripts shall be made available upon request of any party, at reasonable cost.\(^{315}\)

10. **POSTPONEMENT:** Request for postponement of a hearing may be granted by the hearing committee only upon showing a good cause and only if the request is made as soon as is reasonably practical.

11. **PRESENCE OF HEARING COMMITTEE MEMBERS AND VOTE:** A majority of the hearing committee must be present throughout the hearing and deliberations. If a committee member is absent from any substantial part of the proceedings, that member may not participate in the deliberations or the decision.

12. **RECESSES AND ADJOURNMENT:** The presiding officer may recess and reconvene the hearing without additional notice for the convenience of the participants or for the purpose of obtaining new or additional evidence or consultation. The hearing committee must reconvene in a timely manner and in any event the recess must not exceed ten (10) days. Upon conclusion of the presentation of oral and written evidence, the hearing shall be closed. At the close of hearing, both the parties to the hearing may provide the hearing committee with a written statement.\(^{316}\) The hearing committee shall, at a time convenient to itself, conduct its deliberations outside the presence of the parties. Upon conclusion of its deliberations, the hearing shall be adjourned. Adjournment shall be no later than seven (7) days after the hearing is closed.

**D. HEARING COMMITTEE AND FURTHER ACTION**

1. **HEARING COMMITTEE REPORT:** Within ten (10) days after final adjournment of the hearing, the hearing committee makes a written report of its findings and recommendations, with specific reference to the hearing record and other documentation considered, and forwards the report along with the record and other documentation to the Medical Executive Committee.

2. **NOTICE AND EFFECT OF RESULTS:**

   a) **NOTICE:** The administrator promptly sends a copy of the result and the basis for the decision to the respondent by special notice, to the president, and to the board.

   b) **EFFECT OF FAVORABLE RESULT:** If the hearing committee’s result is favorable to the respondent, the administrator shall include in the notice to the Medical Executive Committee its right to request an appellate review by the board as

\(^{315}\) All records should be made consistently by court reporter, rather than make the form of record a subject of request and possibly dispute by one party or the other. A reliable record is critical for all parties involved. Under the HCQIA, the subject has a right to the record at reasonable cost.

\(^{316}\) The HCQIA calls for the right to submit a written statement at the close of the hearing.
provided in these bylaws. If there is no appeal by the Medical Executive Committee, the board may act on the hearing committee result or refer the matter back to the Medical Executive Committee for further consideration. Any referral back shall state the reasons, set a time within which a subsequent recommendation must be made, and may include a directive for any additional hearing. After receiving a subsequent recommendation and any new evidence, the board takes action.

If the board’s action is favorable, it becomes the final action. If the board determines that the hearing committee’s result is not supported by the evidence or was not reached consistent with these bylaws, it may reject it and impose the original Medical Executive Committee recommendation or a variant thereof. If the Board determines to impose a variant of the original action, and such action would adversely and differently affect the respondent, the administrator then promptly provides the respondent with special notice informing the respondent of the right to request a new hearing on the changed action.

c) **EFFECT OF AN ADVERSE RESULT:** If the decision by the hearing committee is adverse to the respondent, then special notice of the hearing committee decision shall notify the respondent of the right to request an appellate review by the board as provided these bylaws. If there is no appeal, the board shall act on the hearing committee result. The board may adopt the hearing committee’s result as the final action. If the board determines that the hearing committee’s result is not supported by the evidence or was not reached consistent with these bylaws, it may reject it and impose a variant thereof or determine that no action against the respondent should be taken. If the board imposes a variant adverse action, the administrator shall then promptly provide the respondent with special notice informing the respondent of the right to request an appellate review by the Board.

**E. INITIATION AND PREREQUISITES OF APPELLATE REVIEW**

1. **REQUEST FOR APPELLATE REVIEW:** A party has ten (10) days after receiving special notice to file a written request for an appellate review. The request must be delivered to the administrator in person or by certified or registered mail and may include a request for a copy of the hearing committee report and record and all other material, favorable to unfavorable, if not previously forwarded, that was considered in taking the adverse recommendation or action. If the party wishes to be represented by an attorney at any appellate review appearance, the request for appellate review must so state.

2. **WAIVER BY FAILURE TO REQUEST APPELLATE REVIEW:** A respondent who fails to request an appellate review within the time and in the manner specified waives any right to a review.

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317While the medical executive committee should not have authority to override the hearing committee, it should have standing as a party to challenge the hearing committee’s decision if it chooses.
3. NOTICE OF TIME AND PLACE FOR APPELLATE REVIEW: The administrator delivers a timely and proper request to the chairman of the board. As soon as practicable, the board schedules and arranges for an appellate review which shall be not less than ten (10) days nor more than twenty-one (21) days after the administrator received the request; provided, however, that appellate review for a member who is under a suspension then in effect shall be held as soon as the arrangements for it may be reasonably made, but not later than twenty-one (21) days after the administrator received the request. At least ten (10) days prior to the appellate review, the administrator sends the respondent special notice of the time, place and date of the review. The time may be extended by the appellate review body for good cause and if a request is made as soon as is reasonably practical.

4. APPELLATE REVIEW BODY: The board shall determine whether the appellate review shall be conducted by the board as a whole or by an appellate review committee of three (3) members of the board appointed by the chairman of the board. If a committee is appointed, one of its members shall be designated as chairman, and its decision shall be adopted by the board as the final action at its next meeting unless it is not supported by the evidence or reached in a manner inconsistent with these bylaws. No members may participate in or act on the appeal if they are in direct economic competition with the appellant or member or otherwise biased against the individual or personally benefit from the outcome.

F. APPELLATE REVIEW PROCEDURE AND FINAL ACTION

1. NATURE OF PROCEEDINGS: The proceedings by the review body are a review based upon the hearing record, the hearing committee’s report, all subsequent results and action, the written statements, if any, provided below and any other material that may be presented and accepted under this article.

2. WRITTEN STATEMENTS: The parties may submit written statements detailing the findings of fact, conclusions and procedural matters with which each disagrees and the reasons therefor. The written statements may cover any matters raised at any step in the hearing process. The statements are submitted to the appellate review body through the administrator at least ten (10) days prior to the scheduled date of the review, except if the time is waived by the review body. The administrator shall provide a copy of the statements to the opposing parties at least ten (10) days prior to the scheduled date of the appellate review.

3. PRESIDING OFFICER: The chairman of the appellate review body is the presiding officer, who shall determine the order of procedure during the review, make all required rulings and maintain decorum.

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318 The use of a committee to hear the appeal should not slow the result unnecessarily by having the board re-evaluate the committee’s decision. To streamline the process, the board should adopt the committee’s action without further ado, unless the committee failed to follow the rules set out here.

319 The appellate body must be impartial also.
4. **ORAL STATEMENTS**: The appellate review body allows the parties or their representatives to personally appear and make oral statements in favor of their positions. Any party or representative appearing is required to answer questions put by any member of the review body.

5. **CONSIDERATION OF NEW OR ADDITIONAL MATTERS**: New or additional matters or evidence not raised or presented during the original hearing or in the hearing report and not otherwise reflected in the record may be introduced at the appellate review only in the discretion of the review body and as the review body deems appropriate, only if the party requesting consideration of the matter of evidence shows that it could not have been discovered with reasonable diligence in time of the initial hearing and that the new or additional matters would have reasonable likelihood of changing the result. The requesting party shall provide, through the administrator, a written, substantive description of the matter or evidence to the appellate review body and the other party at least three (3) days prior to the scheduled date of the review.

6. **POWERS**: The appellate review body has all the powers granted to the hearing committee, and any additional powers that are reasonably appropriate to or necessary for the discharge of responsibilities.

7. **PRESENCE OF MEMBERS AND VOTE**: A majority of the review body must be present throughout the review and deliberations. If a member is absent from any part of the proceedings, he shall not be permitted to participate in the deliberations or the decision.

8. **RECESSES AND ADJOURNMENTS**: The review body may recess and reconvene the proceedings without additional notice for the convenience of the participants or for the purpose of obtaining new or additional evidence or consultation. At the conclusion of the oral statements, if allowed, the appellate review shall be closed. The review body shall then, at a time convenient to itself, conduct its deliberations outside the presence of the parties. The appellate review shall be adjourned at the conclusion of those deliberations.

9. **ACTION TAKEN**: The review body may affirm, modify or reverse the result or action or in its discretion, may refer the matter back to the hearing committee for further review and recommendation to be returned to it within twenty-one (21) days and in accordance with its instructions. Within ten (10) days after receipt of such recommendation after referral, the review body shall take action. The action is immediately effective if the review body is the board itself, or if the review body is a committee, the decision shall be directly referred to the board for final action. The decision shall be in writing, shall specify the reasons for the action taken and shall be

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320 The appellate process should not be closed to oral arguments to promote the opportunity to adequately explain the case, and thus ward off challenges of unfairness at the appellate level.
forwarded to the president, the medical executive and credential committees, the
respondent, and the administrator.

G. GENERAL PROVISIONS

1. NUMBER OF HEARINGS AND REVIEWS: Notwithstanding any other
   provision of the medical staff bylaws, no respondent is entitled to request more than
   one (1) evidentiary hearing and appellate review with respect to the subject matter
   that is the basis of the adverse recommendation or action.

2. RELEASE: By requesting a hearing or appellate review under this plan, the
   respondent agrees to be bound by the provisions of the medical staff bylaws relating
to immunity from liability.

3. CHALLENGES TO RULES: The hearing committee is not authorized to
   modify, limit, or overrule any rule or requirement, and shall not entertain challenges
   to such rules and requirements. Any medical staff member who wishes to challenge
   an established rule or requirement involving the subject matter of a hearing must first
   notify the Medical Executive Committee of the rule or requirement he/she wishes to
   challenge and of the basis for the challenge. If the Medical Executive Committee
   decides to reconsider the particular rule or requirement, the Medical Executive
   Committee may stay the action recommended against the member pending the
   outcome of the process of reconsidering the rule or requirement.

ARTICLE VIII. ALLIED HEALTH PROFESSIONALS

Each allied health professional (“AHP”) shall be assigned to the medical staff
department [and section] [service] appropriate to his or her occupational or professional
training and, unless otherwise specified in the medical staff bylaws, rules and
regulations, shall be subject to terms and conditions paralleling those specified for
medical staff members as they may logically be applied to AHPs, whether employed by
the hospital or another health care entity or by licensed independent practitioners, to
promote a uniform standard of quality patient care.

A. Sponsored AHPs

In the event an AHP’s required sponsor or supervisor loses or resigns clinical privileges
or the legal right to sponsor and/or supervise the AHP, then the AHP’s privileges are
automatically suspended. This shall not be deemed an adverse action, and shall not
entitle the AHP to the procedural rights set forth in this Article. The AHP may be
reinstated upon substitution, within ninety (90) days, of another qualified medical staff
member sponsor or supervisor. If the sponsor or supervisor is not substituted within this
period, the AHP privileges terminate.

321 The HCQIA calls for the physician or dentist to receive a copy of the written decision including a
statement for the basis for the decision.
B. AHP Hearing And Appeal Process

1. Hearing Process
Whenever the Medical Executive Committee or the board makes a recommendation or proposes to take an action to restrict or deny an AHP’s clinical privileges for more than thirty days or any application therefor, the administrator shall provide the AHP with written notice of the recommendation, the reasons therefor and the time period within which the AHP can request a hearing. If a hearing is requested, the president shall name and the administrator shall appoint a committee of three (3) unbiased medical staff members and allied health professionals with clinical privileges to hear the AHP’s objections to the proposed action or recommendation no sooner than thirty days from the date of the request. A record of the hearing shall be made. The committee’s recommendation shall be in writing, shall reflect consideration of the information presented at the hearing, and shall be provided to the AHP, the Medical Executive Committee, and the board.

2. Appeals
The AHP and the Medical Executive Committee each have the right to appeal the committee’s recommendation by submitting written statements to the board within thirty days of receipt of the recommendation. The board, or a committee thereof, shall review the parties’ written submissions. If the appeal is reviewed by a committee, it shall promptly provide the parties and the board with its recommendation. Upon consideration of the hearing committee recommendation and the information presented at appeal, the Board shall take final action and shall thereupon provide all parties with its decision, and the reasons therefor, in writing.

3. Reporting
Final actions regarding allied health professionals’ privileges shall not be reported to the National Practitioner Data Bank.

322 JC MS.01.01.01, Element of Performance 15 calls for bylaws to include “A description of the mechanism for a fair hearing and appeal process.” JC MS.10.01.01 calls for the hearing process to include hearing rights for non-members with clinical privileges, but acknowledges that the hearing rights for non-members may differ from those provided to members. Because the HCQIA does not apply to any other professionals other than dentists and physicians, its hearing standards need not be met either.

323 JC standard MS.06.01.07 Element of Performance 4 states, “The organization makes the practice aware of available due process or, when applicable, the option to implement the Fair Hearing and Appeal Process for Adverse Privileging Decisions as described in MS.10.01.01.”

324 JC standard MS.10.01.01 Element of Performance 4 states, “The organized medical staff has developed a fair hearing and appeal process addressing quality of care issues that has the following characteristics: identifies the composition of the hearing committee as a committee that includes impartial peers.”

325 Adverse actions against allied health professionals are optional under the National Practitioner Data Bank reporting regulations. Since there is no protection for review of allied health professionals under the HCQIA, not reporting the outcome of such reviews may lessen the liability exposure resulting from the adverse action.
ARTICLE IX. INDEMNIFICATION

The hospital shall defend (or cover the costs incurred for defense by), and cover settlements, judgments and damages amounts on behalf of any medical staff leader or other member of the medical staff serving on or assisting any hospital or medical staff committee, or assisting in peer review or quality management activities involving care provided at the hospital, involved in claims arising out of such activities, so long as the member of the medical staff acted in good faith.

ARTICLE X. BYLAWS, RULES AND REGULATIONS AND POLICY AMENDMENT AND EFFECT

Medical staff organization documents shall be adopted and amended strictly and exclusively according to the process established in these bylaws.

A. Policy

The Medical Executive Committee, or the medical staff, after communicating with the members of its Medical Executive Committee present, shall review, develop and adopt policies that are binding upon the medical staff and its members and those otherwise holding clinical privileges. Such policies must be consistent with the medical staff bylaws, rules and regulations. Only policies adopted consistent with this section are binding upon the medical staff and its members. Any medical staff policies approved by the board are upheld by the board. Amendments to medical staff policies are to be distributed in writing to medical staff members and those otherwise holding clinical privileges in a timely and effective manner.

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326 If the members of the medical staff did not conduct peer review, the hospital would not be eligible for JC accreditation or state licensure. While the medical staff members are protected to some degree by immunity statutes, they will incur costs in establishing that immunity. The statutory immunity will not completely protect against the costs and liabilities faced by those conducting peer review; for example, the federal immunity does not apply at all to review of any practitioners other than physicians and dentists. To encourage the conduct of peer review, the hospital should indemnify medical staff members against these liabilities.

327 Under pending Joint Commission standard MS 01.01.01, Elements of Performance 24 and 25, medical staff bylaws are to include the processes for adopting and amending medical staff bylaws, rules and regulations, and policies.

328 Implementing pending Joint Commission standard MS 01.01.01, Element of Performance 9, which states, “If the voting members of the organized medical staff propose to adopt a rule, regulation, or policy, or an amendment thereto, they first communicate the proposal to the medical executive committee. …”

329 Consistent with pending Joint Commission standard MS 01.01.01, Element of Performance 1, which states that “The organized medical staff develops medical staff bylaws, rules and regulations, and policies.”

330 Pending Joint Commission standard MS 01.01.01 Element of Performance 7 states, “The governing body upholds the medical staff bylaws, rules and regulations, and policies that have been approved by the governing body.”

331 Consistent with pending Joint Commission standard MS 01.01.01 Element of Performance 9, which requires that if the organized medical staff, with the approval of the governing body, has delegated to the medical executive committee the authority to adopt policy or amendment thereto, the medical executive committee communicates this to the medical staff.
B. Rules and Regulations

The medical staff shall initiate and adopt such rules and regulations as may be necessary to implement more specifically the general principles found within these Bylaws and to delineate the level of practice that is to be required of each practitioner in the hospital.\(^{332}\)

Suggestions for changes in the rules and regulations may be referred to the Bylaws Committee, which shall present its recommendations in timely fashion to the Medical Executive Committee for review and comment and referral to the medical staff. In addition, rules and regulations amendments can be proposed by a petition signed by [20] members in good standing, without any committee review.\(^{333}\)

The rules and regulations shall only be amended, added to, or repealed at a regular or special meeting of the medical staff at which a quorum is present by a majority vote of those active staff members present. All amendments, additions, or recommendations for rule and regulations repeal must be presented to the medical staff at least fifteen (15) days prior to the meeting at which they are to be acted upon. Rules and regulations changes shall become effective when approved by the board, \(^{334}\) which shall not be unreasonably withheld.\(^{335}\)

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\(^{332}\) Rules and regulations typically detail requirements for specific clinical practices, particularly for issues that tend to be subject to frequent changes since rules and regulations are typically more easily amended. Issues that are not addressed in this Model but that should be addressed in a medical staff’s rules and regulations include mechanisms for ensuring physician response to inpatient emergencies twenty-four (24) hours per day, called for in Georgia regulations 290-9-7-.09(c)7; designation of who is qualified to conduct an emergency medical screening examination where emergency services are provided, called for in Georgia regulations 290-9-7-.09(c)8; requirements for the patient’s history and physical examination, called for in Georgia regulation 290-9-7-.09(c)10; requirements for medical records completion, called for in Georgia regulations 290-9-7-.09(c)12; requirements for verbal orders, called for in Georgia regulations 290-9-7-.09(c)13; and autopsy requirements, called for in Georgia regulations 290-9-7-.09(d).

\(^{333}\) Pending Joint Commission standard MS 01.01.01, Element of Performance 8 states, “The organized medical staff has the ability to adopt medical staff bylaws, rules and regulations, and policies, and amendments thereto, and to propose them directly to the governing body.”

\(^{334}\) Georgia regulations 290-9-7-.09 (b) 2 states, “The governing body shall appoint members of the medical staff within a reasonable period of time after considering the recommendations of the medical staff, if any, and shall ensure the following: That the medical staff is organized and operates under medical staff bylaws and medical staff rules and regulations, which shall become effective when approved by the governing body…”

\(^{335}\) The AMA believes that (1) the medical staff bylaws, rules and regulations should be initiated and adopted by the medical staff and should establish a framework of self-government; (2) the medical staff should govern itself by these bylaws, rules and regulations which should: (a) be approved by the governing body, whose approval should not be unreasonably withheld; (b) be reviewed and revised as necessary to reflect current medical staff practices, and (c) define the Executive Committee of the medical staff, whose members are selected in accordance with criteria and standards established by the medical staff; and (3) the medical staff should have authority to approve or disapprove all amendments to medical staff bylaws, rules and regulations.” AMA Policy Compendium H-235.989.
C. Bylaws Amendment

The medical staff shall initiate and adopt such medical staff bylaws as may be appropriate for operation of the medical staff. Suggestions for changes in the Bylaws shall be referred to the Bylaws Committee, which shall present its recommendations in timely fashion to the Medical Executive Committee for review and comment and referral to the staff. In addition, medical staff bylaws amendments can be proposed by a petition signed by [20] members in good standing, without any committee review. All amendments, additions, or recommendations for medical staff amendment must be circulated to the medical staff at least fifteen (15) days prior to the meeting at which they are to be acted upon. Amendments can be made at a regular or special meeting of the medical staff at which a quorum is present, by a majority vote of those active staff members present. Bylaws amendments shall become effective when approved by the board, which shall not be unreasonably withheld.

D. Technical Amendments

The Medical Executive Committee has the authority to adopt such amendments to the policies, rules and regulations, and bylaws as are, in its judgment, strictly technical clarifications, or renumbering of the Bylaws or amendments made necessary because of punctuation, spelling or other errors of grammar or expression. After adoption, such amendments shall be communicated in writing to the medical staff and to the board. Such amendments shall be effective immediately but are subject to reversal by vote of the medical staff or the board within ninety (90) days of adoption by the Medical Executive Committee. The action to amend may be taken by motion acted upon in the same manner as any other motion before the Medical Executive Committee.

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336 Pending JC standard MS 01.01.01, Element of Performance 2, states “The organized medical staff adopts and amends medical staff bylaws. Adoption or amendment of medical staff bylaws cannot be delegated.” Under Pending JC standard MS 01.01.01, Element of Performance 24, the medical staff bylaws are to include “the process for adopting and amending the medical staff bylaws.”

337 JC standard MS 01.01.01, Element of Performance 1, states “The organized medical staff develops medical staff bylaws, rules and regulations, and policies.”

338 Pending Joint Commission standard MS 01.01.01, Element of Performance 8 states, “The organized medical staff has the ability to adopt medical staff bylaws, rules and regulations, and policies, and amendments thereto, and to propose them directly to the governing body.”

339 Georgia Regulations 290-9-7-.09 (b)2 states, “The governing body shall appoint members of the medical staff within a reasonable period of time after considering the recommendations of the medical staff, if any, and shall ensure the following: … That the medical staff is organized and operates under medical staff bylaws and medical staff rules and regulations, which shall become effective when approved by the governing body…” . Pending Joint Commission standard MS 01.01.01, Element of Performance 2 states, “(medical staff) Bylaws become effective only upon governing body approval.”

340 The AMA believes that (1) the medical staff bylaws, rules and regulations should be initiated and adopted by the medical staff and should establish a framework of self-government; (2) the medical staff should govern itself by these bylaws, rules and regulations which should: (a) be approved by the governing body, whose approval should not be unreasonably withheld; (b) be reviewed and revised as necessary to reflect current medical staff practices, and (c) define the Executive Committee of the medical staff, whose members are selected in accordance with criteria and standards established by the medical staff; and (3) the medical staff should have authority to approve or disapprove all amendments to medical staff bylaws, rules and regulations.” AMA Policy Compendium H-235.989.
E. Direct Medical Staff Amendment Process

In addition to the processes established in this Article, amendments to the medical staff bylaws, rules and regulations and policies can be adopted by action of the medical staff, without action by the Medical Executive Committee, at any general medical staff meeting or any special medical staff meeting called for the purpose of amending the bylaws, provided a quorum is present, by a majority vote of those active members present.

F. Effect of the Policies, Rules and Regulations and Bylaws

1. Effect of Conflicts

a) Among Medical Staff Documents. If there is a conflict between the policies and the rules and regulations, the rules and regulations prevail. If there is a conflict between the bylaws and rules and regulations, the bylaws shall prevail.

b) Between Medical Staff Bylaws and Hospital Documents. If there is a conflict between the medical staff bylaws and the hospital bylaw or policies, the medical staff bylaws shall prevail as the only mutually adopted document.

2. Exclusivity

The mechanisms described herein shall be the sole method for the initiation, adoption, amendment, or repeal of the medical staff rules and regulations.

3. Effect of the Bylaws

Upon adoption and approval of these bylaws, the hospital and the medical staff agree that these bylaws shall be binding upon the medical staff, its members, and upon the hospital, and upon any successor in interest in this hospital. Affiliations between the

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341 Pending JC standard MS 01.01.01, Element of Performance 8 states, “The organized medical staff has the ability to adopt medical staff bylaws, rules and regulations, and policies, and amendments thereto, and to propose them directly to the governing body.”

342 Under pending Joint Commission standard MS 01.01.01, Element of Performance 54, “the medical staff bylaws, rules and regulations, and policies, the governing body bylaws, and the hospital policies are compatible with each other and are compliant with law and regulation. The medical staff bylaws, rules and regulations, and policies, and the governing body bylaws do not conflict.” In case of an incompatible bylaw or policy being adopted by the hospital, the medical staff bylaws, as adopted by the medical staff and the hospital together, should override incompatible terms in the hospital’s documents.

343 Under pending Joint Commission standard MS 01.01.01, Element of Performance 5, “The medical staff complies with the medical staff bylaws, rules and regulations, and policies.”

344 AMA Principle for Strengthening the Physician-Hospital Relationship #7 states, “Organized medical staff bylaws are a binding, mutually enforceable agreement between the organized medical staff and the hospital governing body, as well as between those two entities and the individual members of the organized medical staff.” AMA Policy Compendium H-225.957

345 As Georgia courts stated in St Mary’s Hospital and reiterated in Satilla, “…notwithstanding the broad power of a hospital authority to control the administrative, operational, and managerial functions of the facility and its staff, a public hospital authority cannot abridge or refuse to follow its existing bylaws concerning staff privileges…Since the issue is existence of a legal duty to follow procedures established pursuant to state law, not the presence of state action, we see no reason to distinguish between public and private hospitals in this context. Both are required to establish staff bylaws; therefore, both should be
hospital and other hospitals, healthcare systems or other entities shall not, of themselves, affect these bylaws.\textsuperscript{346}

This section also implements pending Joint Commission standard MS 01.01.01, Element of Performance 6, which states that “The governing body upholds the medical staff bylaws, rules and regulations, and policies that have been approved by the governing body.”

\textsuperscript{346} Our AMA encourages individual hospital medical staffs to develop bylaw provisions affirming the binding effect of the bylaw provisions on both the governing body and the medical staff, where consistent with applicable state law. The medical staff bylaws also should contain a successor-in-interest provision to protect medical staffs from a hospital ignoring the medical staff bylaws, and establishing new medical staff bylaws to apply post-merger, acquisition, affiliation, or consolidation.” AMA Policy Compendium H-235.991.
### TABLE OF AUTHORITIES

#### CASES

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<tr>
<td>Alonso v. Hospital Authority of Henry County</td>
<td>Alonso v. Hospital Authority of Henry County et al.</td>
<td>175 Ga. App. 198 (332 SE2d 884) (1985)</td>
<td>The exclusive contract failed to reference the medical staff bylaws termination procedures, so Dr. Alonso had no contract right to the bylaws provisions. Dr. Alonso was limited to the contract termination process, which was appropriately followed.</td>
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<td>Baldwin County Hosp. Authority v. Wright</td>
<td>Baldwin County Hosp. Authority et al. v. Wright</td>
<td>202 Ga. App. 9 (413 S.E.2d 484) (1991)</td>
<td>An order allowing Dr. Wright to discover committee proceedings was overturned because Georgia statutes provide an absolute privilege, even in the face of bad faith.</td>
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<td>Cobb County Kennestone Hospital Authority v. Prince</td>
<td>Cobb County-Kennestone Hospital Authority v. Prince et al.</td>
<td>242 Ga. 139 (249 SE2d 581) (1978)</td>
<td>A hospital can enforce its resolution/policy (here, requiring the use of hospital-owned equipment) through credentialing and privileging actions, akin to hospital decisions to exclusively contract, as an administrative decision not subject to judicial intervention.</td>
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<td>Emory Clinic v. Houston</td>
<td>Emory Clinic v. Houston; and vice versa</td>
<td>258 Ga. 434 (369 S.E.2d 913) (1988)</td>
<td>A malpractice action seeking information from the peer review/medical review process yielded this frequently-quoted Georgia Supreme Court opinion describing state peer review laws as placing “an absolute embargo upon the discovery and use of all proceedings, records,</td>
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<td>John Doe, MD v. Leavitt</td>
<td>Finding and recommendations of peer review groups and medical review committees in civil litigation.</td>
<td>1st U.S. Circuit Court of Appeals (2009); 2009 WL 81655 (1st Cir. 2009).</td>
<td>Denying physician’s challenge to Data Bank report on the grounds that the investigation had not been closed.</td>
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<td>South Georgia Medical Center v. Meeks</td>
<td>Limiting peer review confidentiality protection to peer review committee evaluations, stripping it from the credentialing information itself.</td>
<td>No. S09G0466. June 8, 2009</td>
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<td>Hollowell v. Jove</td>
<td>Disclosing whether medical review committee meetings included review of a certain case, and who attended the meetings, intruded on committee proceedings and was not allowed under Georgia confidentiality protection.</td>
<td>247 Ga. 678 (279 S.E.2d 430) (1981)</td>
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<td>Patrick v. Floyd</td>
<td>Compares and contrasts the Georgia state law immunity for peer review with the federal immunity established in the HCQIA. Georgia statute protects peer review &quot;unless (the peer reviewer) was motivated by malice toward any person affected by such activity.&quot; (O.C.G.A. § 31-7-132) The HCQIA does not disqualify peer review motivated by malice but protects peer review that meets its conditions of good faith peer review. The court</td>
<td>255 Ga. App. 435 (565 S.E.2d 491) (2002)</td>
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<td>Patton v. St Francis Hospital et al.</td>
<td>Dr. Patton</td>
<td>260 Ga. App. 202 (¶581 S.E.2d 551) (2003)</td>
<td>Year-long review of Dr. Patton’s care in a case in which failure to order a test may but may not have changed the outcome resulted in termination recommendation. Dr. Patton’s request for committee minutes and other peer review information was appropriately denied due to the strong legislative intent to protect review proceedings from discovery and grant immunity from civil liability to review participants.</td>
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<td>Lee v. Hospital Authority of Colquitt County</td>
<td>Dr. Lee</td>
<td>D. C. Docket No. 02-00073-CV-HL-6 January 27, 2005</td>
<td>Dr. Lee asked to resign in lieu of proceeding with investigation of his competence and obtained a letter stating his privileges had not been adversely acted upon. His challenge to the hospital’s report of his resignation to the National Practitioner Data Bank was unsuccessful because the report was consistent with the HCQIA.</td>
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<td>Satilla v. Bell</td>
<td>Satilla Health Services Inc. v. Bell et al.; Satilla Health Services Inc. v. Pilcher et al.</td>
<td>633 S.E.2d 575, 280 Ga. App. 123, (2006); 2006 WL 1719550</td>
<td>Hospital’s attempt to impose exclusivity by contract and by barring non-contracting cardiologists’ access to hospital resources through board resolution failed under the court’s finding that Georgia law did not hold that Georgia’s “motivating malice” condition is preempted by the HCQIA.</td>
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<td>St. Mary’s Hosp. of Athens, Inc. v. Radiology Professional Corporation</td>
<td>St. Mary's Hospital of Athens, Inc. v. Radiology Professional Corporation, et al.</td>
<td>205 Ga. App. 121, 126 (3) (b) (421 SE2d 731) (1992)</td>
<td>St. Mary’s Hospital’s attempt to terminate its contract with Dr. Cohen and his professional corporation was inconsistent with medical staff bylaws provisions on termination of privileges. The court held that, like public hospitals, private hospitals cannot arbitrarily ignore or abridge medical staff bylaws; both public and private hospitals must follow the medical staff bylaws. The court acknowledged the hospital’s right to exclusively contract but held that it cannot exercise that right in a manner inconsistent with the medical staff bylaws. The decision instructs hospitals that they can terminate privileges to protect exclusivity for contracts, but only if permitted by the bylaws themselves or the contracts with individual physicians (rather than only in the physician’s professional corporations contracts).</td>
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<td>Stein v. Tri-City Hospital Authority</td>
<td>Stein v. Tri-City Hospital Authority d/b/a South Fulton Hospital</td>
<td>192 Ga. App. 289 (384 SE2d 430) (1989)</td>
<td>Dr Stein’s challenge against revocation of membership due to his failure to meet new malpractice insurance requirements failed. Medical staff bylaws authority over members</td>
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<td>Whitaker v. Houston County Hospital Authority et al.; and vice versa</td>
<td>272 Ga.App. 870 (613 S.E.2d 664) (2005)</td>
<td>Dr Whitaker’s challenge to termination of all his privileges, not only those made exclusive by contract, failed even though the hospital could not disregard the medical staff bylaws under Georgia law, because the contract Dr. Whitaker had signed clearly stated that all privileges would terminate with the contract, and that the right to challenge the termination would be waived.</td>
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<td>EMTALA</td>
<td>Emergency Medical Transfer and Active Labor Act of 1986</td>
<td>42 U.S.C. §1395dd see also: EMTALA INTERP GUIDELINES §489.24(j)(2)(i) CMS Memorandum Ref #S&amp;C-02-34, “On-Call Requirements-EMTALA” (June 13, 2002).</td>
<td>Intended to prohibit patient dumping. EMTALA requires hospitals to provide evaluation for emergency medical conditions without consideration of the patients’ ability to pay. To provide stabilization, hospitals must post a list of physicians on call. EMTALA does not require physicians to serve on call.</td>
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<td>Medicare COP</td>
<td>Medicare Conditions of Participation</td>
<td>42 C.F.R. §482.42(a) et seq.</td>
<td>Federal regulations setting forth the requirements for Medicare participation, including the section cited which calls for designation of an infection control officer or officers.</td>
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<td>Medicare exclusion</td>
<td>OIG Exclusion from Federal Health Care Programs</td>
<td>42 CFR §1001.1901</td>
<td>Federal regulation prohibiting payment by Medicare or any other federal health care programs for any services ordered or furnished by any excluded physician.</td>
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<td>National Practitioner Data Bank reporting regulations</td>
<td>National Practitioner Data Bank for Adverse Information on Physicians and Other Health Care Practitioners</td>
<td>45 CFR 60.1 et seq.</td>
<td>Regulations detailing what licensure actions, credentialing action and malpractice payments must be reported federally.</td>
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<td><strong>Georgia Regs</strong></td>
<td>Department of Human Resources (DHR) Rules Of Department Of Human Resources Office Of Regulatory Services Chapter 290-9-7 Rules And Regulations For Hospitals</td>
<td>GA Comp. R. &amp; Regs.290-9-7 et seq.</td>
<td>Georgia DHR Rules and Regulations for hospitals setting out the minimum requirements for state certification.</td>
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<td><strong>Georgia Code Section 31-7-x</strong></td>
<td>Title 31 Chapter 7 Regulation And Construction Of Hospitals And Other Health Care Facilities (2006)</td>
<td>O.C.G.A. 31-7-1 et seq.</td>
<td>Georgia statutes including peer review and confidentiality protections for medical staffs.</td>
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<td><strong>Georgia Code Section 31-12-x</strong></td>
<td>Title 31 Chapter 12 Control of Hazardous Conditions, Preventable Diseases, And Metabolic Disorders (2006)</td>
<td>O.C.G.A.31-12-2(a)</td>
<td>Authorized the Department to require reporting of certain diseases and related data for statistical and research purposes, such as the Georgia Comprehensive Cancer Registry.</td>
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# OTHER RESOURCES

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<td>American College of Surgeons</td>
<td>American College of Surgeons Commission on Cancer, Cancer Program Standards 2004 (Revised Edition)</td>
<td><a href="http://www.facs.org/cancer/coc/programstandards.html">http://www.facs.org/cancer/coc/programstandards.html</a></td>
<td>The multi-disciplinary Commission on Cancer of the American College of Surgeons establishes standards for cancer care delivered primarily in hospital settings; assesses compliance with those standards through hospital surveys; collects standardized and quality data from approved hospitals to measure treatment patterns and outcomes; uses the data to evaluate hospital performance; and develops educational interventions to improve cancer care outcomes.</td>
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<td>(CEJA)</td>
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<td>Georgia Uniform Healthcare Practitioner Credentialing Application Form &amp; Reappointment Form</td>
<td><a href="http://www.georgiacredentialing.org/">http://www.georgiacredentialing.org/</a></td>
<td>The forms were developed by the Georgia Hospital Association, the Georgia In-House Counsel Association, the Georgia Association Medical Staff Services and the Georgia Association of Health Plans, with input from the Medical Association of Georgia.</td>
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<td>JC Standard</td>
<td>Joint Commission Hospital Accreditation Standards</td>
<td>Joint Commission Comprehensive Accreditation Manual For Hospitals: The Official Handbook (2010).</td>
<td>The Joint Commission is the primary hospital standards—setting and accreditation body, governed by a Board of Commissioners that includes AMA representatives. Note “Pending JC Standard MS 01.01.01” goes into effect March 31, 2011.</td>
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<td>MAG Policy</td>
<td>Medical Association of Georgia Policy Compendium</td>
<td><a href="http://www.mag.org/healthpolicyresearch/">http://www.mag.org/healthpolicyresearch/</a></td>
<td>Policy statements adopted by the MAG House of Delegates based on professional principles, scientific standards, and the experience of Georgia practicing physicians</td>
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