

# ACG GI Practice Toolbox

## Professional Society Opportunities/Involvement

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### INTRODUCTION:

Involvement in professional society activities, whether by participating in education, service, or leadership, is one means by which to contribute to the profession, beyond clinical practice, basic or clinical research, or teaching at one's institution. This can be a fulfilling aspect of one's professional career.

### TOPIC OVERVIEW:

There are a number of reasons to participate in the activities of a professional society. Such activities allow the opportunity for networking with colleagues, often from across the country and the world.<sup>1</sup> Ideally, professional networks are mutually beneficial and may lead to opportunities for higher service within a professional society. The second reason to participate in society activities is to enhance one's career.<sup>1</sup> Most professional medical societies have numerous resources available to membership, including: practice management tools; educational resources, such as hands-on training, CME and MOC; research grants; and assistance with advocacy, both at the national and state levels. In addition, achieving "Fellowship" status in a professional medical society is a professional honor that can enhance one's resume. Another important reason to participate in a professional society, even if at the level of membership alone, is the benefit of receiving timely and important information that may affect one's clinical practice. Examples of this include medical advances affecting patient care or clinical research, such as from a society's journal (online or print), and legislative and public policy updates. Finally, for some, volunteering to serve on a professional society committee or to give a lecture at a course could potentially mitigate physician burnout.

To varying degrees, all of the major gastroenterology and hepatology professional societies afford members opportunities to participate in educational endeavors, committee service, and leadership.<sup>2-3</sup> For most of these societies and their activities, society leadership either asks a member to serve as faculty or as a committee member, and/or solicits interested members via an established process, often online.

The American College of Gastroenterology (ACG) currently has over 20 active committees on which a member may serve.<sup>3</sup> In turn, some of these committees allow for participation in subgroups, where specific tasks are assigned. In the ACG, input is generally sought from all committee members, and how active (or passive) a member is depends on the individual



member. Depending on how active a committee member is, one may be ultimately asked to serve as the Vice-Chair or Chair of the committee, and/or be offered other opportunities for service within the College.

The ACG is unique among the GI societies because of the ACG Board of Governors. A grass-roots body within the College, the Board of Governors is comprised of elected Governors in each state, and acts as a conduit from ACG membership to the ACG Board of Trustees, and vice versa. Governors are elected for a three-year term, with the possibility of re-election for a 2<sup>nd</sup> three-year term. The responsibilities of ACG Governors include increasing membership, promoting Fellowship status within the College, advocating for ACG's legislative and public policy agenda, and communicating members' concerns to ACG leadership.

A new opportunity for society involvement in the ACG is the creation of the National Affairs Action Network (NAAN). The NAAN is a virtual body; it is a data base containing the names, contact information, and relationships between ACG members and elected representatives and senators, both at the state and federal level. This information is organized by state, so that if a state-related legislative or public policy issue required urgent attention, ACG staff would activate the NAAN, so that ACG members on the list could contact their elected representatives and make the case.

#### **PRACTICAL SUGGESTIONS AND EXAMPLES FOR YOUR PRACTICE:**

1. Consider joining a committee of the ACG, by clicking on the following link: <http://gi.org/membership/committees/join-a-committee> This is a webpage on the ACG website where one may indicate his or her committee preference.<sup>6</sup> Of note, committee assignments for the following year are made in June by the President-Elect and the Vice-President.
2. Consider running for ACG Governor when the College sends out an invitation for nominees, when one's state or region is holding elections. Please note: one must be a Fellow of the ACG to stand for nomination and election as ACG Governor.
3. Ask your Governor and others in ACG leadership for other opportunities to serve the College, including educational endeavors.

#### **RESOURCES:**

1. <https://www.higheredjobs.com/articles/articleDisplay.cfm?ID=157>
2. <http://gi.org>
3. <http://gi.org/membership/committees/join-a-committee>

