



Notice of Proposed AAPL Bylaw Change

Updated April 9, 2026

Dear AAPL Members,

The AAPL Executive Council has approved the following motion to remove the mandatory membership requirements for AAPL membership eligibility from the AAPL Bylaws.

AAPL Executive Council October 29, 2025:

MOTION: To remove the requirement for APA, AACAP, and comparable psychiatric organizations membership, for AAPL membership eligibility, from the AAPL Bylaws. CARRIED”

This change to the AAPL Bylaws will require approval by the membership. **The vote for this change will take place at the 2026 AAPL Semi-Annual Business Meeting taking place virtually on June 10 @ 6:30 PM EST.** The required quorum of voting members in attendance at the Semi-Annual Business Meeting is fifty (50). In order to become effective, the amendment must be approved by two-thirds of the membership casting votes.

Registration is required to attend the Semi-Annual Business Meeting. [Register Here.](#)

The information that follows outlines:

- the specific proposed changes to the AAPL Bylaws;
- the due diligence process that was followed; and,
- the pros and cons of this change as discussed by the AAPL-APA Membership Task Force

Proposed Bylaw Changes

The proposed changes to the AAPL Bylaws are outlined below:

Article III – Membership

Section 1 – Eligibility

(ADD) *Membership is open to Individuals that are psychiatrists, or are psychiatric residents, fellows or medical students.* **(REMOVE)** ~~Only members of the American Psychiatric Association, the American Academy of Child and Adolescent Psychiatry, or comparable psychiatric associations in countries other than the United States will be eligible for membership in the Academy. The word, “members,” as used in this paragraph, will include any category of physician membership in that association.~~

Section 2 – Classes of Membership

Section 2b

Members-in-training are persons who are enrolled at least half time in an appropriately accredited psychiatric **(ADD) residency or fellowship (REMOVE) post-doctoral** training program **(REMOVE) and who are concurrently members of one of the professional organizations listed in Article III, Section 1.**

Members-in-training may not hold office in the Academy. Benefits of membership-in-training, as well as adjustment in dues and assessments, are determined by the Executive Council.

Section 2e

Medical students are persons enrolled fulltime in an appropriately accredited medical school **(REMOVE) and who are concurrently members of one of the professional organizations listed in Article III, Section 1.** Medical students may not hold office in the Academy nor be voting members of committees unless authorized by the Executive Council. Benefits for medical student membership, as well as adjustments of dues and assessments, are determined by the Executive Council.

Due Diligence Process Outline

- **June 1, 2024:** AAPL Executive Council – “MOTION: To remove the APA/AACAP/Affiliate membership requirement for AAPL membership eligibility. CARRIED”
- **October 23, 2024:** AAPL Executive Council – “MOTION: To approve the proposed changes to the Bylaws. CARRIED”
- **October 25, 2024:** AAPL Annual Business Meeting, Vancouver, BC - Concerns were raised about the notification to members regarding the proposed Bylaw changes and suggestions were made for additional due diligence regarding the APA membership requirement. Bylaw changes were tabled.
- **January 2025:** AAPL - APA Membership Task Force was created to undertake due diligence.
- **January – October 2025:** Several meetings of the APA – AAPL Task Force took place. After multiple vigorous discussions the task force members voted on whether to maintain the APA required membership and all but 1 voted in favour of doing so, provided APA respond positively for additional benefits for AAPL members.
- **May – August 2025:** Two meetings were held with the APA to discuss potential additional APA benefits for AAPL members including a dues reduction.
- **October 16, 2025:** AAPL received a letter from APA with an offer to maintain mandatory APA membership requirement. The APA offer was for APA to promote the AAPL Annual Meeting and to sponsor an exhibit table at the AAPL Annual Meeting. AAPL requested an APA dues reduction for AAPL members that are members, however, the APA noted, “...we determined we cannot offer a permanent membership dues discount.” The APA further noted, “Regardless of your decision on the membership requirement, APA remains committed to our partnership with AAPL.”

- **October 29, 2025:** AAPL – APA Membership Task Force recommends to AAPL Executive – *“...that AAPL not make APA membership a requirement for AAPL membership. AAPL should, however, encourage APA membership so that our members can participate in and influence advocacy and judicial action.”*
- **October 29, 2025:** AAPL Executive Council – *“MOTION: To remove the requirement for APA, AACAP, and comparable psychiatric organizations membership, for AAPL membership eligibility, from the AAPL Bylaws. CARRIED”*
- **October 29, 2025:** AAPL Executive Council – *“MOTION: To address the required Bylaw changes at the 2026 Semi-Annual Business Meeting. CARRIED”*
- **October 30, 2025:** A panel session took place during the AAPL Annual Meeting program about what the APA does in the psychiatric arena and how AAPL interacts with the APA.

Pros & Cons for Requiring APA Membership

The following represents the pros and cons that the AAPL-APA Membership Task Force discussed. It is unclear what the impact of the mandatory APA membership, or its removal, would have on some of these points.

CONS

- Cost reduction to AAPL members for annual AAPL dues as well as the required dues for the required additional membership.
- Some data indicate that this is a barrier to AAPL membership growth
- Not all AAPL members agree with some policy positions the APA has supported
- APA or other mandatory membership options are not verified by AAPL
- No other Psychiatry Specialty Society requires this
- Some AAPL members perceive that there is no benefit to AAPL and do not want to be required to join APA

PROS

- APA manages all ethical complaints against AAPL members because they also are members of the APA. This is an adversarial and costly process for a professional society that is handled by APA which pays all the costs. Ethics complaints would need to be managed elsewhere if they are not APA members.
- APA does work that benefits AAPL members at no cost to AAPL as an organization, e.g. writing amicus briefs and developing resource documents and position statements that are on forensic topics and practice.
- AAPL can choose to sign on to briefs written by APA at minimal or no cost.
- AAPL has large influence on APA in terms of impact on the Council on Psychiatry and Law and the Committee on Judicial Action.
- AAPL’s medical director has an ex-officio seat on both the APA’s Council on Psychiatry and Law and the Committee on Judicial Action and costs of attendance at these meetings is supported 50% by APA (and 50% by AAPL)

- Dual membership keeps the specialty as a whole tied to organized psychiatry at a larger scale, which is perceived to amplify AAPL's voice.
- APA pays some of the costs for AAPL participation at the AMA House of Delegates meeting. (This applies to all other specialty societies.)
- AAPL could utilize APA resources to help educate AAPL members, e.g. ask APA to give a presentation at AAPL meetings about how individual members could get involved in advocacy with their district branches and state legislatures.

The above information outlines the proposed changes, and frames the due diligence process that was followed, as well as the pros and cons discussed within the AAPL-APA Membership Task Force.

This information is being presented to AAPL members in advance of a vote on proposed AAPL Bylaw changes to remove the mandatory membership requirements for AAPL membership eligibility. **The vote on the proposed changes will take place at the 2026 AAPL Semi-Annual Business Meeting taking place virtually on June 10 @ 6:30 PM EST.**

Registration is required to attend the Semi-Annual Business Meeting. [Register Here.](#)

If you have any questions, please contact the AAPL office at office@aapl.org.