



# **Special Interest Group Communities Manual**

## **Table of Contents**

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- I. Purpose
- II. Overview
- III. Operational Structure
  - a. SIG Oversight
  - b. Governance
  - c. Succession
  - d. Elections & Voting
  - e. Orientation
  - f. Annual Calendar
  - g. Membership List
- IV. Lifecycle
  - a. Formation Process
  - b. Activities once Established
  - c. Disbanding/Dissolution of SIGs
- V. Responsibilities and Restrictions
- VI. Resources
- VII. Waiver
- VIII. Appendices
  - a. Current Special Interest Groups
  - b. Sample Annual Report Template
  - c. Electronic Voting Guidance
  - d. Online Member Community Usage Instructions

## **I. PURPOSE**

The American Society of Pediatric Hematology/Oncology (ASPHO) provides a platform for Special Interest Groups (SIGs) that fosters sharing of insights, collaboration, and resources among dedicated professionals across the globe with similar interests and challenges. The Society recognizes SIG communities as rich repositories of specialized knowledge that advance pediatric hematology/oncology research and patient care.

## **II. OVERVIEW**

ASPHO SIGs are member groups or communities formed around interests or specialties that share the same focus and are aligned with the mission and goals of the Society. A SIG provides members with specialized networking and professional development or the opportunity to work on a specific project, issue, or program. Common interests may be topic focused, based on career level or credentialing, or other foci that may suit the needs of the organization and its members. The thread is a commonality among all participants.

## **III. OPERATIONAL STRUCTURE**

### **a. SIG Oversight**

The Member Engagement Committee is responsible for broad oversight of the Society's SIG program to ensure alignment with Society mission and goals. The Member Engagement Committee provides an initial review of proposals to form new SIGs and makes a recommendation to the Board of Trustees whether or not to approve the community. The Committee is also charged with measuring activity to determine a community's sustainability.

The link to the governance structure will also facilitate the flow of information to/from the SIGs, which provide valuable insight to the organization as subject matter experts.

### **b. Governance**

Important distinctions exist between SIGs and Committees. Committees are established by the Board of Trustees to carry out assigned charges to meet Society strategic goals with support of staff resources, whereas SIGs are established through member application to meet, collaborate, and network for professional development or to address issues affecting the broader field of pediatric hematology/oncology aligned with ASPHO's mission.

### **c. Succession**

ASPHO promotes regular succession and transition of SIG leadership to maintain communities that best reflect both SIG and overall Society membership. Beginning the third year after a SIG is established, the Chair and Vice Chair each serve a one-year term.

### **d. Elections & Voting**

Leadership of each SIG should be handled by a three-position team, consisting of the following positions: Chair, Vice Chair, and Past Chair. Beginning the third year following establishment of the SIG, elections will be held annually, and each officer will serve for a term of one year; that is, a SIG's first elections will take place after the founding leadership has planned and held SIG meetings for two conferences. Elections should be conducted in the winter following the 2nd conference, with

new leadership transitioning immediately following the third conference. Any ASPHO member in good standing who is also a member of the SIG and has not served as a leader for the SIG during the prior year may be nominated by themselves or another current member of the SIG for the open position of Vice-Chair.

Elections for a new Vice Chair may be held at the SIG meeting during the conference with attending ASPHO members eligible to vote, or electronically\* through the SIG's designated online member community prior to the conference. Profile information must be made available on the member community for electronic voting. Elections are not required if only one candidate application is received by the publicized deadline. Each member of the SIG is entitled to one vote and a majority of members voting shall govern; a quorum is not required. If the election is managed electronically, a reasonable timeframe must be allowed for voting and results, directly from the voting tool, must be provided to the ASPHO National Office for filing prior to membership notification.

Terms of the officer positions will begin at the conclusion of the ASPHO Conference and the election cycle should coincide beginning no earlier than four months prior to and no later than the close of the Conference. Vacancies during a term are filled for the Chair by the Vice Chair. A vacancy of the Vice Chair is determined during the next SIG elections.

\*Each SIG can select its own electronic voting tool. ASPHO can make recommendations if needed. Votes should be anonymous if held electronically.

**e. Chair Orientation**

An orientation for SIG Chairs and Vice Chairs will be held annually to review ASPHO policies, resources and answer questions about managing the communities.

**f. Annual Calendar**

Several leadership meetings are held during the year to familiarize SIG Chairs and Vice Chairs with resources and policies as they manage their communities:

- Onsite Conference Meeting
- Annual Orientation
- Mid-Year Meeting
- Conference Planning Meeting

Additional important calendar dates include:

- Deadline for copy describing SIG meeting held at ASPHO Conference session topic, title and speakers
- Election process timeline for incoming SIG leadership

**g. Membership List**

SIG membership records and contact information are maintained by the National Office.

**IV. LIFECYCLE**

**a. Formation Process**

Any group of 50 or more members who intend to participate in the community may apply for the formation of a SIG by submitting a SIG Petition Form to the National Office that will include the name of the proposed SIG, the description of the proposed mission, activity and scientific/clinical/career focus, expected return on investment to the Society by establishing the community, targeted audience or membership, identified leadership who will preside as chair and chair-elect for the first term, as well as the names and signatures of the petitioning members. (Signatures may be collected electronically.)

Upon confirmation of the signees' membership status, the Membership Committee conducts an initial review to determine relevance to the overall membership demographics and ASPHO's mission. Possible outcomes of the Membership Committee review include: 1) approve the application for final consideration by the Board of Trustees, 2) request additional information, 3) propose recommendations to better align with the Society's mission, and 4) decline the application.

Applications are accepted throughout the year, however, applications will be considered and voted upon twice annually.

**b. Activities once Established**

SIG communities should be active throughout the year and during the annual conference. The online Member Community provides a convenient platform for members to communicate about SIG-specific issues and resources (**see Code of Conduct**). A minimum of 50 SIG members must be maintained after establishment through the online SIG community. Chairs are required to provide an annual Report to the Board of Trustees following review by the Membership Committee, summarizing activities of the past year and plans for the year ahead.

SIGs are provided time and space to hold an annual meeting open to all attendees during the ASPHO Conference. SIG programs at this onsite meeting may feature a special topic and speaker(s), business meeting of the SIG, workshop, or other format productive to the group. SIGs wanting a speaker to present at the meeting are encouraged to invite knowledgeable ASPHO members inclined to attend the conference or specialists local to the host city. Slides used during the SIG meeting may be shared in the community library; video or audio recordings of the SIG meetings are not permitted without permission from ASPHO.

SIGs choosing to create webinars or other approved programs for the benefit of their members may post announcements and a link to the webinar only through its member community. Before announcing a webinar, SIG leadership must submit the webinar topic and proposed date to ASPHO staff to avoid conflicts with other ASPHO events. SIGs choosing to create webinars for the benefit of all ASPHO members may submit a proposal through the ASPHO Call for Webinars conducted in the 2<sup>nd</sup> quarter of each year.

**c. Disbanding/Dissolution of SIGs**

The ASPHO Board of Trustees, upon the recommendation of the Member Engagement Committee, may decide to disband or dissolve, or seek new leadership in the case of any SIG that is consistently non-compliant with ASPHO SIG policies, conducting business that is unlawful or inconsistent with

the Society's mission, or inactive.

Rather than allowing for continuation of a potentially disappointing experience with a SIG Community, the Member Engagement Committee may recommend termination or repeal of SIGs that fail to meet member needs provided that the SIG has had a probationary period of one year during which time leadership has had the opportunity to address concerns. Any SIG that experiences inactivity (defined by membership decline or a lack of activity); fails to provide annual reports; shows evidence of member dissatisfaction; or due to the inability of leadership to meet ASPHO policy requirements, including unprofessional conduct that undermines the intent and goals of Society leadership and the collegial relationships among its members by SIG/Community leadership or members should be subject to sunseting.

In the event a SIG is disbanded or dissolved, all records and reports must be forwarded to the National Office.

## **V. RESPONSIBILITIES AND RESTRICTIONS**

The Chair is charged with leading the group's activities and elections and maintaining accountability and reporting to the Board of Trustees on an annual basis. Leadership of the SIG should also communicate with the SIG members throughout the year including preparing updates and communication for their web page; foster dialogue regarding issues and ideas relevant to the membership and Society.

SIGs operate within Society's incorporation, bylaws, policies, and insurance, and as such are accountable to the Society to comply with applicable laws and rules. The Society may call upon its SIGs for expertise and commentary in areas of research, clinical practice, or policy.

SIGs must abide by the policies of the Society, and specifically:

- May not use the name or logo of the Society without authorization (e.g., publication, social media, presentations, research). Furthermore, may not produce content in any format as a whole or by individual members to be shared as an ASPHO product with non-members.
- Will not act independently in the name of or on behalf of the Society.
- Will not communicate opinions or positions in the name of ASPHO without approval and express prior consent of the Board of Trustees (e.g., including guidelines, standards, etc.).
- Proposals for solicitation of external funds to be used for annual Conference purposes must be submitted to the ASPHO Board of Trustees for approval prior to submission. Funding from pharmaceutical/industry organizations will not be considered.

## **VI. RESOURCES**

The following resources are available to SIGs over the course of one year (from annual conference to annual conference). The resources allocated below are based on resources and funding approved in the Society's budget.

- Dedicated web page on the ASPHO website, [www.aspho.org](http://www.aspho.org), to share information about the SIG
- Dedicated online Member Community to foster discussion and resource sharing
- Online Member Community for Chairs and Vice Chairs of SIGs
- Scheduled time and room space at the annual conference at times that do not conflict with official educational programming. Facilities include a room and basic audio-visual services. Attendance is

open to any interested attendee on a space-available basis.

- The Chair may submit information for dissemination to members in the ASPHO *eNews*, or similar electronic communications, once per year.
- Up to three video or conference calls annually utilizing the ASPHO conference line or Zoom account and required 30 days advance notice.
- ASPHO will announce upcoming SIG elections, if managed via electronic voting, to the full membership and encourage members to join the online communities via email and the member newsletter.

## **VII. WAIVER**

A request for a waiver to this manual, or for any topic not currently addressed, should be forwarded to the Member Engagement Committee for consideration prior to submission to the Board of Trustees for approval.



## Special Interest Groups

**Adolescent and Young Adult SIG:** The mission of the Adolescent and Young Adult SIG is to improve the care of adolescents and young adults with cancer and blood disorders through education, clinical collaboration, advocacy, and research initiatives by supporting ASPHO members in this field.

**Advanced Practice Provider SIG:** The Advanced Practice Provider SIG is dedicated to providing a forum for the exchange of ideas and information among individuals with advanced degrees, including nurse practitioners, clinical nurse specialists, and physician assistants, as well as the promotion of their role in the field of pediatric hematology and oncology.

**Cancer Predisposition SIG:** The mission of the cancer predisposition SIG is to develop and implement educational initiatives focusing on the identification, management and surveillance of children with cancer predisposition syndromes (CPS) and support innovative research projects for members of the ASPHO community.

**Clinical Immunology SIG:** The Clinical Immunology SIG's mission is to support the advancement of ASPHO members and the field by facilitating the incorporation of clinical immunology into the practice of pediatric hematology/oncology.

**Diversity, Equity & Inclusion SIG:** The DEI SIG aims to support the advancement of all ASPHO members and the field through increasing diversity and inclusiveness in a broad sense in the membership and leadership of ASPHO, as well as the home institutions of members.

**Global Pediatric Hematology/Oncology SIG:** The mission of the Global Hematology Oncology SIG is to improve the diagnosis, care, and outcomes for children with hematologic and oncologic disease across the world through the development of training partnerships and collaborative research.

**Hemoglobinopathy SIG:** The Hemoglobinopathy SIG aims to promote collaboration among Pediatric Hematologists/Oncologists who care for children, adolescents and young adults with sickle cell disease and other hemoglobinopathies.

**Hospitalist Medicine SIG:** The mission of the Hospitalist Medicine SIG is to promote evolution of the fellowship-trained PHO Hospitalist role as either a clinical pathway within PHO programs or as a defined sub-specialization area.

**Informatics, Innovation and Entrepreneurship SIG:** The purpose of the Informatics, Innovation and Entrepreneurship SIG, or IIE SIG, is to provide a collaborative platform for pediatric hematologist/oncologists with interests in healthcare technology, innovation, and entrepreneurial activities that meet the needs of pediatric hematology/oncology patients, clinicians, and the overall healthcare system.

**Integrative Pediatric Hematology/Oncology SIG:** The Integrative Pediatric Hematology-Oncology Special Interest Group is dedicated to the promotion of evidence-based integrative therapies for supportive care and optimization of wellness in children with cancer and blood disorders.

**Palliative Care SIG:** The mission of the Palliative Care SIG is to accelerate the availability of high-quality palliative care to pediatric oncology patients across the country.

**Physician Scientist SIG:** The mission of the Physician Scientist SIG is to support the advancement of ASPHO members and the field through advocacy for physician scientists among the membership and leadership of ASPHO and related professional organizations, as well as the home institutions of the members.

**Quality Improvement and Patient Safety SIG:** The mission of the Quality Improvement and Patient Safety SIG is to support, educate, and encourage members in striving to provide the highest quality and safest care to pediatric hematology/oncology patients.

**Small Program SIG:** The Small Program SIG aims to improve clinical care, treatment options, and outcomes for children diagnosed with cancer or blood diseases across the spectrum of smaller practices throughout the US and Canada, through networking, participation in research, and mentorship.

**Vascular Anomalies SIG:** The Vascular Anomalies SIG's mission is to improve the care of children and young adults with vascular anomalies through multicenter collaborative research.

**Well-Being SIG:** The mission of the Well-Being Special Interest Group is to develop and maintain a community of practice with which to facilitate discussion, establish collaborative curriculums, and share approaches to addressing drivers of distress, thereby contributing to the well-being of ASPHO members.



## Electronic Voting Guidance

Special Interest Group (SIG) leaders are responsible for the following activities:

- Managing nominations call and tally of results for incoming Vice Chair. Suggest collecting statement of intent/CV if desired.
- Selecting online voting tool. ASPHO can make recommendations if desired.
- Managing election vote and results tally through an online voting tool.
- All communications must go through the online SIG community.
- Sharing summary of results, directly from the voting tool, with ASPHO staff for documentation purposes before announcing the results.
- Determining results prior to the annual meeting.
- Announcing results at or prior to the annual meeting.

To ensure that voting participants are current Society members, nomination and voting calls are to take place through SIG communities in the online Member Community.

General Election Steps for SIG Chairs:

- Determine required vs. optional submission materials
  - Required: Candidate name, credentials, institution
  - Optional: CV, Statement of Interest, etc.
- Create online voting ballot
- Invite SIG members to submit candidacy
  - Timeline: recommend 3-week deadline
- Invite SIG members to vote
  - Timeline: recommend 1 week deadline, including a weekend
- Share results with ASPHO via documentation sourced from the voting tool
- Upon confirmation from ASPHO, announce results to SIG members

Templates provided by ASPHO to SIG Leadership include: Candidacy Communication, Vice Chair Application, SIG Election Ballot, SIG Vice Chair Announcement.

Each SIG is responsible for creating their own ballot system and ensuring:

- Names of voters, and votes cast, are visible only to SIG leader serving as administrator
- One vote per SIG member
- No lobbying conducted by candidates on ASPHO platforms



## Online Member Community Usage Instructions

### To access the Online Member Community:

Access the ASPHO Member Community at <http://connecting.aspho.org/home>, or through the ASPHO website, [www.aspho.org](http://www.aspho.org), by clicking on the Member Community link.

Login with your ASPHO member username and password by clicking the Sign In button in top right corner. *Your username is the email address used to access your ASPHO account; unique passwords are created by members when they join. Contact Member Services for assistance retrieving your username and resetting your password (the latter can also be done online at ASPHO's [Member Community](#)) at 847-375-4716 or [info@aspho.org](mailto:info@aspho.org).*

### To access a Special Interest Group Community:

To Join a SIG: Go to My Accounts at <http://apps.aspho.org/MyAccount>, Go to Membership and Participation and click on Special Interest Groups to join individual communities. You may also join directly via the ASPHO Member Community at <http://connecting.aspho.org/home>.

To access the SIG: If you are already a member, Go to the Communities tab, click on My Communities, and click on the SIG name.

To email a SIG: You can email the SIG community by responding to an existing discussion thread or creating a new discussion post within the SIG community. Files can be uploaded to the library for viewing.

### To manage your notifications (i.e., how quickly emails arrive in your inbox):

1. Click on your profile/photograph in the top right corner
2. Click 'Profile'
3. Click 'My Account'
4. Click 'Community Notifications'

*The community can be bookmarked on laptop, phone, and other devices for convenient access and participation.*