

Res. A-03-18

December 4, 2017

TITLE: Political Resources to Help Family Physician Champions Win Elections

Introduced by: CAFP Board of Directors

Endorsed by: CAFP Board of Directors

WHEREAS, advocacy is ranked as one of the top priorities for both the American Academy of Family Physicians (AAFP) and state chapters; and

WHEREAS, the California Academy of Family Physicians (CAFP) established the Family Physicians Political Action Committee (FP-PAC) in 2004 to strengthen advocacy efforts in California; and

WHEREAS, a political action committee is critical to building relationships with candidates committed to the issues of importance to family physicians and their patients; and

WHEREAS, many of the key issues for family medicine are greatly affected by state legislation; and

WHEREAS, CAFP and FP-PAC have limited resources to solicit contributions from members; and

WHEREAS, less than three percent of CAFP members carry the full weight of FP-PAC's political activity benefiting ALL California family physicians; and

WHEREAS, FP-PAC currently does not have the financial resources to compete with the political action committees of chiropractors, optometrists, trial lawyers and others vying for the attention of lawmakers; in just the third quarter of 2017, CAFP was ranked 377th out of 500 California organizations in terms of political spending* (see below for others' rankings); and

WHEREAS, electing champions for family medicine to the State Legislature ensures family medicine's voice is heard and action is taken with our specialty's values in mind; now, therefore be it

RESOLVED, that Family Physicians Political Action Committee (FP-PAC) and the California Academy of Family Physicians (CAFP) pursue the inclusion of a \$49 per Active member political contribution for FP-PAC in tandem with AAFP/CAFP/local chapter dues collection; and be it further

RESOLVED, that in the pursuit of inclusion of a \$49 per member Family Physicians Political Action Committee contribution in tandem with AAFP/CAFP/local chapter dues collection, the following language should be included on the dues invoice:

"Of the total amount paid in dues, \$49 will go to the Family Physicians Political Action Committee (FP-PAC) of the California Academy of Family Physicians (CAFP). Please contact CAFPP (cafp@familydocs.org) if you do not wish this amount to be used for FP-PAC political purposes; that amount will instead go to CAFPP's general fund. CAFPP assumes that your dues are paid by you individually. If that is not the case, please contact CAFPP at cafp@familydocs.org or call (415) 345-8667."

*Total amount of dues among AAFP, CAFPP and county chapters as shown on the dues bill.

Speaker's Notes:

Fiscal Note: Fiscal implications are included below. Current CAFPP dues are \$300.

1) PROBLEM STATEMENT: What specific practice problem does this resolution seek to solve, or, if this resolution pertains to a proposed new CAFP policy or change of policy, what issue does it seek to address?

The Family Physicians Political Action Committee (FP-PAC) has seen slow, but steady growth in contributions since its creation in 2004, but not in contributors. Less than 250 contributors carry the financial weight of family medicine's campaign activity in California – under three percent of CAFP's total membership. This level of participation, combined with annual contribution totals roughly \$60,000, deprive FP-PAC of the resources it needs to be a major player in the political arena. Repeated environmental scans have revealed that the only way to make the leap into a higher echelon of health care political action committees (PACs) is to link contributions to membership dues. The American Academy of Family Physicians (AAFP) has repeatedly rebuffed efforts to accomplish this, mostly on the grounds of increased direct cost and administrative burden.

CAFP staff recently spoke with the Executive Director of the California Society of Anesthesiologists (CSA), who faced the same issue with CSA's national organization. CSA developed a solution that removed the burden from the national organization by legally adding a designated contribution to its PAC as an increase in its state chapter dues. CAFP staff then followed up with Ashley Titus, an attorney who advised the California Society of Anesthesiologists on this matter, to confirm the legal requirements and obstacles to linking the dues to a PAC contribution. FP-PAC can accomplish this change, with the support of the CAFP Board, the CAFP All Member Advocacy Meeting and the American Academy of Family Physicians (AAFP).

For FP-PAC to have the resources to compete with other PACs in the health care world, it must expand its donor base and total contributions through more than just face-to-face and email/mail solicitations.

Most AAFP Large and Extra-Large state chapters have dues \$50 - \$99 higher than California's at \$300: CO \$415; FL \$350; GA \$365; IL \$390; IN \$365; MD \$395; MI \$375; MN \$325; NY \$290; NC \$340; OH \$399; PA \$350; TX \$350. AAFP's 2019 dues will be \$445.

An approximate \$50 increase allocated to FP-PAC, for example, would equate to \$280,000 in contributions (i.e., \$50 x 5,600 members). This amount does not include those who likely would continue to contribute more annually. This could yield annual total contributions of more than \$300,000. Such resources would make it possible for FP-PAC to play an extremely active role in state elections, especially in targeted races. FP-PAC also could participate in Independent Expenditures (IEs), something its current resources preclude. For example, FP-PAC could send direct mail to constituents in a family medicine champion candidate's district (estimated cost \$15k-\$40k) touting the support he or she has from family physicians. Given the stellar reputation of family physicians, FP-PAC would immediately be seen as a political player with the influence to sway votes and elections. In addition, FP-PAC could hold events for the Senate President Pro Tem and Speaker in the homes of family physicians. The contribution for such events typically requires a donation of \$20,000 or more, which would take up more than two-thirds of FP-PAC's current budget. With more than \$300,000 in its coffers, however, FP-PAC could easily dedicate that level of funding to events for key legislative leaders.

It is important to note that contribution restrictions on support or opposition to ballot measures would still exist for FP-PAC, (limiting contributions to less than five percent of total yearly contributions), but that would be the case even if FP-PAC received more than \$1 million in contributions.

2) PROBLEM UNIVERSE: Approximately how many CAFP members or members' patients are affected by this problem or proposed policy?

All Active members of CAFP would be affected by this proposed policy – approximately 5,600.

3) WHAT SPECIFIC SOLUTION ARE YOU PROPOSING TO RESOLVE THE PROBLEM OR POLICY, i.e., what action do you wish CAFP to take?

CAFP would ask AAFP to put a disclaimer on the dues statement or potentially on the dues insert that says, "Of the total amount paid in dues, \$49 will go to the Family Physicians Political Action Committee (FP-PAC) of the California Academy of Family Physicians (CAFP). Please contact CAFP (cafp@familydocs.org) if you do not wish this amount to be used for FP-PAC political purposes; that amount will instead go to CAFP's general fund. CAFP assumes that your dues are paid by you individually. If that is not the case, please contact CAFP at cafp@familydocs.org or call (415) 345-8667."

*Total amount of dues among AAFP, CAFP and county chapters as shown on the dues bill.

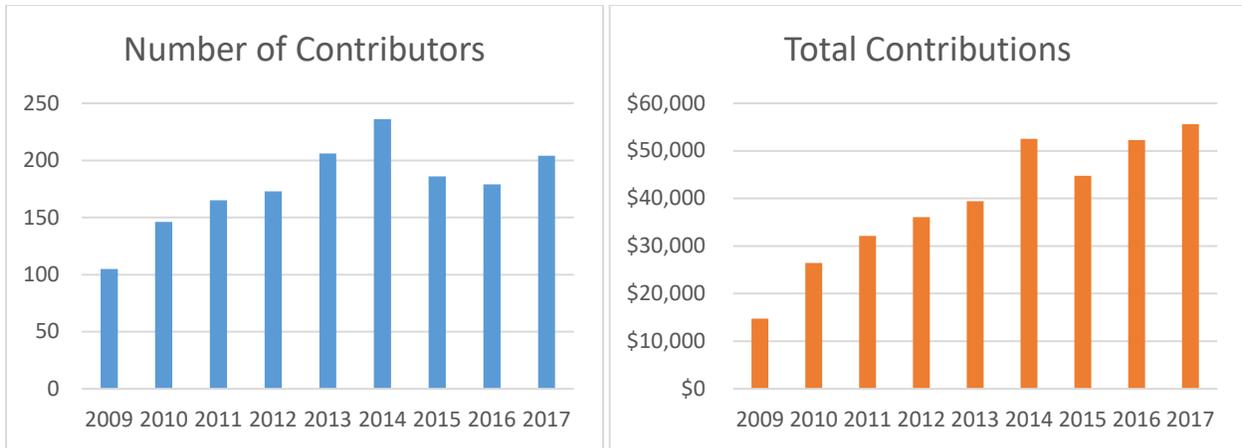
IT IS NOT REQUIRED, but FP-PAC staff recommends including the opt-out option shown above.

If a medical group or employer is DIRECTLY paying a member's dues, which is completely legal, FP-PAC only needs to attribute that money to the group or employer (e.g., Hill Physicians) in filing reports. Limits exist on how much a single medical group or employer can contribute to FP-PAC (\$7,300), but this will not likely be an issue as we are unaware of any large medical groups or employers that directly pay CAFP membership dues for their family physicians. If the medical group or employer gives the member a stipend that he or she uses to pay membership dues, FP-PAC simply attributes the donation to the physician.

If the dues are paid directly by a public entity (e.g., UC Davis) or a 501(c)(3) (e.g., Mercy Medical), funds cannot be dedicated to FP-PAC. To avoid the additional hassle for AAFP (maybe to CAFP as well) of tracking down the non-member payer of the dues, FP-PAC staff recommends including a disclaimer that reads: "CAFP assumes that your dues are paid by you individually. Contact CAFP if that is not the case."

4) WHAT EVIDENCE EXISTS TO: 1) INDICATE THAT A PROBLEM EXISTS; OR 2) THAT THERE IS NEED FOR A NEW OR REVISED POLICY?

While FP-PAC financial growth has been steady, it has relied on a small number of donors (~200) who disproportionately fund the majority of FP-PAC activities benefiting all CAFP members (9,000+) and family physicians in the state (12,000+).



FP-PAC, sometimes in collaboration with other chapter state PACs, pursued several strategies to link PAC contributions to membership dues at the national level; each has failed to increase contributions or was rejected by AAFP for cost and administrative concerns. Our strategies included:

- 1) Adding an insert in the dues package that informs members of FP-PAC’s existence and provides a link to the FP-PAC website (which has resulted in ZERO contributions to date).
- 2) Requesting that AAFP offer an “opt-in” contribution on the dues form to allow a member to check a box and contribute to FP-PAC (which AAFP rejected).
- 3) Partnering with other AAFP state chapters with PACs to pass resolutions forcing AAFP to take action to improve state PAC contributions (which FP-PAC rejected).

5) PLEASE PROVIDE CITATIONS to support the existence of the problem and your proposed solution.

Third quarter reporting on political spending in California (500 reporting):

- #27 - Consumer Attorneys of California
- #60 - California Optometric Association
- #106 - Blue Shield of California
- #289 - California Society of Anesthesiologists
- #377 - California Academy of Family Physicians

Source: <http://www.sacbee.com/news/politics-government/capitol-alert/article183131981.html>