

This member-related e-mail is a service offered to you as an Academy Member.

Date: May 21, 2008

To: State Ophthalmology Society

- Presidents
- Presidents-Elect
- Membership Chairs
- Councilors/Alternate Councilors
- Executive Directors

From: Cynthia Bradford, MD, Secretary for State Affairs
Daniel Briceland, MD, Associate Secretary for State Affairs

Re: State Society Membership Development: Board Members Must Participate!

A robust and active membership is crucial for every association, so by taking on a leadership role, you also commit to encouraging membership in your state ophthalmology society.

10 Ways Board Members Can Help Their State Ophthalmology Society Grow*

1. Create a membership recruitment "culture" in your state society by involving volunteer leaders and members, as well as staff in membership recruitment activities
2. Lead by example - ask your colleagues to join the society
3. Promote the society's activities through your local, county, and/or [state medical society](#)
4. Publicize your leadership position in your state society whenever and wherever possible (i.e. add it your bio., put it in any presentations you make to other organizations, add to your business cards, etc.)
5. When talking to a peer about joining, be "ethical" (i.e. avoid negative comparisons to other groups/organizations)
6. Make personal calls to inactive members to encourage them to participate; suggest particular society activities that might be of interest to them (e.g., educational events, service on committees, participating in vision screenings in their communities, etc.)
7. Write a "testimonial" letter that highlights why the society is important to you, that your society can keep on file and use in appropriate membership efforts
8. Come to Board meetings with suggestions on structural, procedural, and marketing adjustments that your society should consider to make membership easier and more attractive
9. Contact non-renewals and encourage them to reconsider and join for another year
10. Send names of prospective members to your executive director

Share this message with all of your board members, and ask all of them to brainstorm ways that the board can help your society grow. Compile a list of these ideas and at your next strategic planning session, and identify 3-4 ideas that the board can put into action.

Examples from State Ophthalmology Societies

In 2007, the **Washington DC Metropolitan Ophthalmological Society's** (WDCMOS) executive committee completed a transforming membership drive that resulted in an invigorated, enthusiastic membership that they hope to harness as the society moves forward. With 55 dues paying members and only 22 society members in attendance at the WDCMOS' September 2006 academic meeting, society leaders decided that the WDCMOS needed a membership overhaul. WDCMOS launched a comprehensive membership campaign that included a focus on academic programs. WDCMOS also created benefits for their members, including group purchasing discounts at Staples and Paychex, an 8% discount for society members on malpractice dues, and improved scientific programs with nationally renowned presenters. Through this effort, WDCMOS nearly doubled its membership to just over 100 dues-paying members, and the next three WDCMOS educational meetings have each had over sixty members in attendance. Society staff and board members consistently hear how excited members are about the meetings and about the society.

The **Kansas Society of Eye Physicians and Surgeons** (KSEPS) is undertaking a strong effort to increase membership by making personal contact with non-members in the state. A letter is being sent to all non-members, followed by personal phone calls to non-members from board members. KSEPS has also created a flier listing the various accomplishments of the society for use in its membership recruitment/retention efforts. The **Missouri Society of Eye Physicians & Surgeons'** board will be implementing a similar effort this year.

* Based on "10 Ways Board Members Can Help the Association Grow" by Mark Levin, CAE, CSP.