

Jul 16, 2025

GDPA Townhall - Proposed Name Update & Governance Modernization

Summary

Lisa Hill, current GDPA President, opened the meeting, which focused on proposed changes to the GDPA bylaws that will be voted on at the Membership Meeting to be held on Saturday during the PEARLS meeting in September. The main proposal is to rename the Georgia Dermatology Physician Assistants (GDPA) to the Georgia Dermatology Professional Association for inclusivity, although Madison Hamilton raised concerns about the scope of this change, and Lisa Hill clarified that including NPs as voting members would not be part of this vote. Lisa Hill also discussed other proposed changes, including allowing electronic voting for future bylaw amendments, simplifying terminology, and revising committee structure and membership criteria.

Details

- **Meeting Setup and Introductions** Lisa Hill initiated the meeting. Attendees, including Julia Lee, Madison Hamilton, Dawn Palletta, Martha Sikes, Laura Bush, Mallerie Aycock, TJ Chao, Matthew Brunner and Takeia H., joined the call, and Lisa Hill noted the informal nature of the meeting, encouraging interruptions for questions ([00:02:09](#)) ([00:12:02](#)).
- **GDPA Bylaws Meeting Purpose** Lisa Hill, the current president of the GDPA, explained that the meeting was to discuss proposed changes to the GDPA bylaws, which would be voted on in person at the Pearls meeting in September. They emphasized the informal nature of the discussion, encouraging attendees to ask questions or use the chat ([00:14:28](#)) ([00:20:19](#)). The goal was to keep the discussion short, sweet, and to the point, going through each highlighted item in the bylaws ([00:05:28](#)).
- **Proposed Name Change for GDPA** The primary proposed change to the bylaws is renaming the Georgia Dermatology Physician Assistants (GDPA) to the Georgia

Dermatology Professional Association. Lisa Hill clarified that this change aims for inclusivity and encompasses the evolving terminology of "physician associates," as recognized by the AAPA and SDPA, allowing for future inclusion of other professional categories like medical assistants or pre-PA school students ([00:15:28](#)) ([00:20:19](#)). Madison Hamilton raised concerns about the purpose of including various professionals if the GDPA's focus remained on the PA profession, leading to a discussion about the organization's mission ([00:21:29](#)) ([00:23:37](#)).

- **Exclusion of NP Voting Member Status Change** Lisa Hill addressed Madison Hamilton's inquiry about including nurse practitioners as voting members, stating that the board decided against this controversial change for the upcoming September vote. They explained that the current focus is on simpler changes like the name change and correcting grammatical errors in the bylaws, with the NP voting status to be addressed, if at all, at a later date ([00:18:02](#)). The proposed changes for this year will not affect the GDPA's status with the SDPA ([00:19:17](#)).
- **Bylaws Update on Electronic Voting and Other Grammatical Changes** Mallory Aycock inquired about the possibility of electronic voting for the proposed bylaw changes, to which Lisa Hill clarified that current bylaws require in-person voting, but electronic voting is one of the proposed changes for future votes ([00:25:47](#)). Lisa Hill also detailed other proposed changes, including simplifying terminology in the bylaws to use the term "PA(s)" due to state by state legislative updates to change to the new title of "physician associate" and replacing "physician assistant" in each states assemblies. It is proposed to replace the terminology physician assistant(s) with "PAs" throughout the document for simplification, and making the language for liaison activities less limiting by removing specific organizational mentions ([00:28:17](#)). Additionally, changes to the criteria defining Fellow and Associate members were outlined to be more concise and encompass current practices for PAs and nurse practitioners with no change to the voting or membership status for either group ([00:29:18](#)). The bylaws would also simplify student membership criteria to just requiring enrollment in an accredited PA program. A grammatical correction for "elected offices of the GDPA" was also noted ([00:31:54](#)).
- **Bylaws Amendments and Committee Structure** A significant proposed amendment is to allow bylaws to be amended by a two-thirds majority of votes cast via electronic means, or another board-approved method, with 30 days' notice, shifting from the current requirement of in-person voting ([00:34:15](#)). Additionally, Lisa Hill explained changes to committee composition rules, making them more open-ended by removing specific minimum member requirements

and allowing chairpersons to select their committee members, aiming for conciseness ([00:33:06](#)). Outdated sections on committee vacancies and member removal were struck as redundant ([00:34:15](#)).

- **Lobbying and Mission Clarification** Julia Lee thanked Madison Hamilton for their input, highlighting the importance of external opinions for the board ([00:27:34](#)). Lisa Hill clarified that the GDPA, as a non-profit organization, cannot engage in lobbying activities. They stated that the organization's mission is to promote the professional and personal development of PAs in dermatology in Georgia, and they can coordinate with other lobbying groups to stay informed on relevant issues impacting members ([00:23:37](#)) ([00:27:34](#)).
- **Meeting Closing and Appreciation** Lisa Hill concluded the meeting by expressing gratitude to all attendees for their time and feedback, emphasizing that the board aims to steer the organization fairly and inclusively for all members and future generations ([00:38:07](#)) ([00:41:07](#)). They reminded members that the notes from the meeting would be available behind the membership paywall and encouraged further questions or interest in joining the board ([00:41:07](#)). Laura Bush specifically thanked Lisa Hill for their leadership in making the information accessible ([00:40:30](#)).