



SIPNA BYLAWS

This edition of By-laws has been dedicated to the founders, past presidents, and those who have worked hard throughout the years to promote and advance SIPNA.

Article I: Name

The name of the association shall be the **Society of Iranian Psychiatrists in North America**, hereinafter referred to as **SIPNA**.

Article II: Logo

The logo consists of two semicircular golden wheat wreaths, symbolizing nurturing, intellectual nourishment, and the offering of bounty in service to humanity, encompassing a golden circle symbolizing unrestricted service throughout the world. Within the golden circle appears a blue book, symbolizing wisdom, and a golden torch, symbolizing knowledge. Above these elements appears the acronym **SIPNA** in blue, reflecting its connection to the book of wisdom. The wheat wreaths rest upon the year **1982**, the year SIPNA was established, and beneath them appears the full name of the organization: **Society of Iranian Psychiatrists in North America**.

Article III: Purpose

Nonprofit Purpose

SIPNA is a professional nonprofit organization and not a political organization within the American Psychiatric Association (APA). Its primary purpose is to establish connections among Iranian psychiatrists in North America, as well as Iranian psychiatrists from Iran and other continents. SIPNA also seeks to address psychological and philosophical issues relevant to Iranian tradition and culture.

Specific Purposes

1. Promoting mental health for people of Iranian heritage through:



- a. Addressing cultural relevance
- b. Providing mental health education for both public and professional audiences
- c. Improving access to mental health care
- d. Offering culturally tailored psychological consultation by reducing cultural and language barriers
- e. Supporting advocacy initiatives to combat all forms of discrimination and promote equal opportunity in all social spheres

2. Supporting the professional development of Iranian psychiatrists through:

- a. Connecting and uniting Iranian psychiatrists
- b. Providing mentorship programs for younger psychiatrists applying for psychiatry residencies in the United States, during residency, and after graduation
- c. Advocating for and assisting with language and cultural barriers in communication with patients and colleagues
- d. Promoting continuous professional development
- e. Creating and promoting networking opportunities

Article IV: Membership

Eligibility for Membership

SIPNA grants eligibility for membership to all active and retired psychiatrists in North America (United States and Canada) upon registration through its website. The organization promotes teamwork, inclusivity, and engagement among members and requires registration for networking and organizational participation.



Membership Categories

1. Voting Members

Eligibility: Psychiatrists of Iranian heritage residing in North America who pay membership dues

Membership Dues: Required

Advantages and Rewards: Mentorship opportunities; sponsorship for psychiatric events; involvement in research projects; formal letters of recommendation; exclusive networking events; priority access to training and workshops

Voting Status: Voting members

2. Non-Voting Members

Eligibility: Members who do not pay membership dues but remain involved in the day-to-day affairs of the Society

Membership Dues: Not required

Advantages and Rewards: Participation in committees; access to online resources

Voting Status: Non-voting members

3. Members in Training (MIT)

Eligibility: Physicians in medical training, including psychiatry trainees, who demonstrate consistent activity in subcommittees or serve as active SIPNA officers and are seeking a training position

Membership Dues: Exempt

Advantages and Rewards: Subsidized conference attendance; internship opportunities; career counselling sessions



Voting Status: May be considered voting members

4. Associate Members

Eligibility: Psychologists, social workers, psychiatric nurses, physician assistants, occupational therapists, speech therapists, and other mental health professionals sponsored by two voting members

Membership Dues: Not required

Advantages and Rewards: Collaborative opportunities; recognition in SIPNA publications

Voting Status: Non-voting members

5. Honorary Members

Eligibility: Exceptionally accomplished individuals representing the Farsi-speaking general public, approved by the Board of Trustees

Membership Dues: Not specified

Advantages and Rewards: Advisory roles; speaking engagements

Voting Status: Non-voting members

Article V: Organization

SIPNA shall be administered by the **Board of Directors** and overseen by the **Board of Trustees**.

BOARD OF TRUSTEES

Article I: Definition



The Board of Trustees shall be composed of five past presidents. The Board shall establish and oversee SIPNA's long-term goals through decisions approved by a two-thirds majority of its members. The Board of Directors (Executive Committee) shall be responsible for implementing SIPNA's policies and managing its day-to-day operations.

Article II: Structure and Responsibilities

A. Composition

1. The Board of Trustees shall consist of five elected members selected from among SIPNA's past presidents.
2. Membership shall be in accordance with the rules and regulations of the American Psychiatric Association (APA).

B. Functions

1. To oversee SIPNA's Bylaws and long-term goals
2. To oversee SIPNA elections

Article III: Meetings

A. Regular Meetings

1. The Board of Trustees shall meet at least annually to oversee SIPNA elections.
2. At the annual meeting, the Board of Trustees shall appoint three of its members to oversee elections and ethical concerns for a term of two years.

B. Special Meetings

In cases of necessity, the Board of Trustees may call an ad hoc meeting.



C. Notice of Meetings

Notice of the time, place, date, and hour of a meeting shall be sent to members by all available means of communication, including email and text message, at least fifteen (15) days prior to the scheduled meeting date.

BOARD OF DIRECTORS (Executive Committee)

Article I: Officers

The daily business of the Association shall be managed by the Board of Directors (Executive Committee) of SIPNA, unless otherwise provided in these Bylaws. The Board of Directors shall consist of the **President, Vice President (President-Elect), Treasurer, Secretary, and Alternate Member**.

Duties of Officers

President

1. Shall be responsible for the daily business of the Association.
2. Shall present the affairs of SIPNA to the Board of Trustees and the General Assembly.
3. Shall preside over and conduct meetings of the Board of Directors and General Assembly.
4. Shall have the authority to sign checks in the Treasurer's absence.
5. Shall have the authority to sign membership certificates and official correspondence on behalf of SIPNA.
6. Shall participate in and encourage all Board members to recruit new members and promote fundraising events.
7. Shall collaborate with other medical societies for educational and professional partnerships.
8. Shall promote scientific and cultural education among members.



9. Shall conduct public education through direct programs and by posting materials on SIPNA's social media channels.
10. Shall support book clubs, journal clubs, and provide assistance to psychiatric residents and new graduates.

Vice President (President-Elect)

1. Shall assume the duties of the President in the President's absence.
2. Shall be actively involved in promoting the Association's goals and membership.
3. Shall be directly responsible for fundraising, including planning and obtaining support from members and, when necessary, outside the Society for fundraising and educational programs, with assistance from subcommittee members as appropriate.

Alternate Member

1. Shall serve as the fifth member of the Board of Directors.
2. May be elected from the general membership.
3. Shall be available to assume the responsibilities of any Board member who, for unforeseen reasons, is unable to fulfill assigned duties.
4. Shall have equal voting power with the other members of the Board of Directors.

Secretary

1. Shall assist the President and the relevant subcommittees in conducting the General Assembly meeting.
2. Shall coordinate with the members of the Board of Directors and subcommittees and maintain an active presence and participation in their meetings.
3. Shall formalize the agendas of Board meetings and maintain records of meetings and daily SIPNA activities.
4. Shall report the minutes of Board meetings to the Board of Directors and post them on the SIPNA website as appropriate.
5. Shall manage daily correspondence and necessary communications between SIPNA members and the Board and shall file any certificates required by federal or state law.
6. Shall keep all social media channels active, up to date, and dynamic.



7. Shall maintain and update member information and identify professionals who meet the criteria for potential membership in SIPNA.

Treasurer

1. Shall be responsible for SIPNA's financial bookkeeping.
2. Shall sign all checks and serve as custodian of SIPNA's bank accounts and credit cards.
3. Shall report SIPNA's financial status to the Board of Directors at quarterly meetings and annually to the General Assembly.
4. Shall provide the annual financial report to the General Assembly.
5. Shall prepare semi-annual financial reports for publication in SIPNA publications and through any communication method deemed appropriate by the Boards of Trustees.
6. Shall file IRS Form 990 and any other forms required by law and ensure compliance with all IRS requirements and licensing obligations necessary for SIPNA to function as a nonprofit organization.
7. Shall actively participate in fundraising activities in collaboration with the President, SIPNA secretaries, and relevant subcommittees.
8. Shall collaborate with financial institutions, pharmaceutical companies, and other potential sources of financial support for SIPNA.

Election of Members of the Board of Directors

1. SIPNA's election cycle shall be biennial. Specific positions elected every two years shall include Secretary, Alternate Member, and Treasurer.
2. Candidates for the Board of Directors shall meet the eligibility requirements established by the American Psychiatric Association (APA).
3. The election process shall follow a defined sequence. Beginning January 1 of each election year, individuals may enter the candidacy process, with candidates finalized by March 10. The election shall take place on March 11 by secret ballot, and results shall be officially declared on April 18. SIPNA voting members shall cast their ballots accordingly. The final step shall be certification of the inauguration by the General Assembly at the SIPNA Annual Meeting, marking the formal commencement of the elected officers' terms.



Nominating Committee

The Board of Trustees Nominating Committee, composed of three elected members of the Board of Trustees, shall be responsible for overseeing the nomination process, evaluating candidates, and ensuring the integrity of elections. While the Committee shall supervise and validate the nomination and election framework, the execution and administration of the election process shall be carried out by the Executive Members or the Board of Directors.

President and President-Elect Election

Any voting member who believes they meet the required qualifications may self-nominate for these positions. The President may not serve two consecutive terms and may run again only four years after the conclusion of the previous presidency. The President-Elect position shall have no limit on re-election unless otherwise provided by future amendment.

Article II: Meetings

Regular Meetings

The Board of Directors shall hold at least one virtual meeting per quarter. Matters of interest shall be discussed, and the Secretary shall ensure that accurate records are maintained and submitted for approval at the next Board meeting.

Annual Meetings



There shall be an annual General Meeting of SIPNA (General Assembly). Together with the President, the chapter candidate in the city or state where the meeting is held, and the Chairperson of the Board of Trustees, the President of the Board of Directors or the President's deputy shall oversee the program. The agenda shall include the President's report, the Treasurer's financial report, and the Secretary's summary of the organization's annual activities. Reports from the Presidents or their designees of SIPNA Chapters and Sections, as well as from Committee Chairs or their designees, shall also be required.

Special Meetings

A simple majority of the Board of Directors, the Chair, or the Executive Committee may call a special meeting. A special meeting may also be called upon petition signed by ten percent (10%) of the voting members. Chapters and Sections may, where appropriate, hold their annual meetings in conjunction with SIPNA or separately, based on their particular needs.

Notice of Meetings

The Secretary of the Board of Directors shall notify all members through the association's website or other available means at least two (2) weeks prior to the scheduled meeting, including the location and program of the gathering.

Voting

Any matter submitted for a vote shall be decided by active members in attendance at the meeting, or by their alternates where applicable, at the meeting location.



Article III: Vacancy or Dismissal of a Board Member

Any vacancy occurring on the Board of Directors shall be filled without undue delay by majority vote of the remaining Board members at a regular meeting. Vacancies may be created and filled in accordance with specific methods approved by the Board of Directors.

Article IV: Replacing a Resigned or Deceased Board Member

The Board of Directors may replace any resigned or deceased Board member with a successor for the unexpired term from among the pool of nominated members who did not receive sufficient votes in the prior election.

Article V: Committees

Committees shall generally be established on a special basis unless otherwise provided under exceptional circumstances. All committees shall remain in close communication and cooperation with similar committees in SIPNA's state chapters and sections. Committees may be formed as the need arises.

General Considerations: Formation of Committees

- A. Active participation in SIPNA subcommittees shall be encouraged and welcomed for members of all categories.
- B. Each subcommittee may be dynamic and structured according to its objectives, with its members deciding whether it should remain permanent or project-based.



- C. SIPNA members may propose the creation of a subcommittee and present their proposal to the Executive Committee for approval and support.
- D. A mentor shall be assigned to each subcommittee from among senior members approved by the Board of Directors.
- E. There shall be no limit to the number of volunteers who may serve on any subcommittee.
- F. The President shall be an ex officio member of every subcommittee for the purpose of facilitating and coordinating activities.
- G. All members of the Executive Committee shall assist and support each subcommittee in its activities.
- H. The ultimate responsibility for the success of each committee shall rest with the President.
- I. Individual mentoring, in addition to regular mentorship assigned to subcommittees, may be requested from any active SIPNA member.
- J. Members of the subcommittees may meet as often as they deem appropriate to achieve their objectives.
- K. Subcommittees may submit quarterly reports to the Board of Directors and the SIPNA General Assembly regarding their work, challenges, obstacles, and successes.

Subcommittees

1. **Psychiatry Education (Public and Professional) Committee:** This committee shall be responsible for advancing psychiatric and mental health education for both the general public and professional audiences. Its purposes shall include promoting mental health awareness, reducing stigma, organizing educational programs and scholarly activities, supporting continuing professional development, and fostering culturally informed psychiatric knowledge relevant to the communities served by the Society.
2. **Mentorship Committee:** This committee shall support senior medical graduates and early-career psychiatrists by providing mentorship throughout the residency matching process, challenges encountered during residency, and job placement after residency. Senior psychiatrist members shall serve as mentors in this process.



3. **Cultural and Community Psychiatry Committee:** This committee shall promote Iranian representation and the Persian Cultural Heritage Caucus within the APA. Its purposes shall include:
 - a. The development and introduction of Persian culture and art
 - b. Addressing women's rights and related issues
 - c. Addressing issues affecting minority populations
 - d. Addressing child safety and development issues, including school violence, bullying, firearms, cultural discrimination, police or security intrusions, and poisoning incidents
4. **Fundraising Committee:** The Vice President shall serve as Chair of this committee, or may designate a distinguished honorary member of the Society or another designee to serve in that role. This committee shall be responsible for supporting SIPNA's financial sustainability through fundraising initiatives, donor engagement, sponsorship development, and related activities.

Article VI: Conflict of Interest and Conflict Resolution

Initial Resolution Efforts

In the event of a conflict within the Executive Board, the involved members shall first attempt to resolve the matter through direct, respectful discussion and negotiation, with the aim of reaching an acceptable solution and common ground.

Mediation by a Neutral Party



If initial attempts at resolution are unsuccessful, the matter shall be referred to a designated SIPNA mediator. Preferably, all parties concerned shall jointly agree upon a senior member of the Board of Trustees, or a designee, to serve as mediator.

Formal Conflict Resolution Committee

If mediation fails to resolve the dispute, a Conflict Resolution Committee composed of three SIPNA members shall be established with the approval of a majority of the Board of Directors. The decision of the majority of the Conflict Resolution Committee shall be final.

Structured Conflict Resolution Process

The Conflict Resolution Committee shall adopt a structured approach that includes hearing all parties' viewpoints, examining relevant documentation, and engaging in impartial deliberation to reach a fair and unbiased conclusion.

Timelines and Transparency

To ensure timely settlement, all stages of the dispute resolution process shall follow predetermined deadlines. Subject to confidentiality requirements, the results shall be disclosed to the other members of the Board.

Final Decision and Appeals



Decisions of the Conflict Resolution Committee shall be deemed final. An appeal process may be made available upon the request of ten percent (10%) of voting members.

Record-Keeping

Confidential records of all conflict resolution proceedings shall be maintained for reference and as guidance in future disputes.

Regular Review

The effectiveness of the conflict resolution mechanism shall be reviewed periodically and revised as necessary to ensure that it remains effective and relevant to the organization's needs.

Implementation

This conflict resolution mechanism shall be fully integrated into the SIPNA Constitution and Bylaws to ensure consistency with existing governance structures. Its primary objective shall be to facilitate fair, efficient, and transparent resolution of conflicts, thereby preserving the integrity and effective functioning of the Executive Board.