



CMDA LOCAL GROUP OVERVIEW

BEGINNING AND GROWING A CMDA COMMUNITY CHAPTER

CMDA: Who Are We?

The Christian Medical & Dental Associations (CMDA) began in 1931 at Northwestern Medical School when a small group of medical students felt a need to relate to other Christians in healthcare for mutual support, service and witness during their training. From those humble beginnings, CMDA has grown into a national organization with over 13,000 members. Never in the modern history of medicine has there been a greater need for this ministry! Healthcare professionals are experiencing profound change due to a radical redefining of their roles and an onslaught against healthcare's bioethical foundations. In light of our unique challenges and opportunities, CMDA exists to educate, encourage, and equip Christian students and professionals to glorify God.

Organizing a Core Leadership Team (CLT)

Instead of vision and direction always coming from the top down, our focus tends to be at the grass roots level—our membership; hence, a community-based approach to ministry. Our community-based model continues today with local members who have a vision for ministry in the healthcare community and who commit to being the owners and stewards of that ministry. One of the key factors we've found for a successful start-up is to identify at least one local "**champion**" who will invest and network to propel ministry forward. However, all members of the Core Leadership Team should be willing to commit their time, talents and treasures to make this ministry successful.

Organizing into a defined and recognized CMDA group opens up additional resources and can help boost the reach & longevity of your efforts. To this end, your **Regional Director** should be informed of your plans to help you navigate the process. Many hundreds of CMDA members have used these groups as vehicles for ministry.

We refer to this organized group as a 'Core Leadership Team' (CLT). To form a CLT, we require a minimum of 3 professional CMDA members (**Join CMDA**) who covenant together via a **Local CMDA Constitution**. All member leaders need to complete a **Leadership Commitment Form**. (LCF)

Your CLT should begin by meeting, praying, and strategizing together. Ultimately the purpose of a CLT is to cast the vision for and give primary direction to the CMDA ministries in its area. Take time to consider those needs which your group has been (or will be) equipped to meet. There are several leading questions you should ask. Why have a fellowship of Christian healthcare professionals? What are the particular needs of our colleagues and students? What does God want us to do? What resources do we need? How much will it cost? Where do we go from here?

Potential Ministry Opportunities

100% of your everyday work is work with God and for God. In addition, local CMDA chapters help encourage:

- Evangelism—leading coworkers/patients to personal faith in Christ;
- Discipleship—encouraging God's work in the lives of each other and those in your influence (students/Residents?), inviting speakers;
- Service—offering opportunities to minister to others in Christ's name;
- Resources/Fellowship—hosting events, equipping the saints for growth, **Faith Rx**, etc;
- Missions—**Global Health Outreach** (GHO) is our global short-term missions program;
- Medical/Dental School Ministry—serving students and serving their local groups
- Voice—being a "City on a Hill" by speaking for Christian healthcare professionals on vital issues.

Progressing to a CMDA 'Council' (i.e. hiring staff)

Should your local ministry needs grow, CMDA staff may need to be hired (part or full time). Though your group is ultimately responsible to raise the full budget necessary to carry out effective ministry, once a staff person is hired, A portion of all CMDA member dues from your area will go directly back to your ministry budget. CMDA has several full-time Area Directors, and many part-time "Associate Staff" who typically minister on a campus. Often, such persons are already in ministry, either in a local church or with another parachurch organization. This director will be accountable to both the local council and to the regional director. Such a process also requires that a council chairperson be selected. Council officers should be active **members of CMDA**, with a completed **LCF**

Your Regional Director can assist you in the process (developing a plan, hiring staff, setting up a financial account through the Bristol, TN office, etc.). A CMDA account (or restricted fund) will allow fast online (tax-deductible) donations directly to your ministry.

You are about to embark on an exciting, rewarding, and life-changing venture as you organize your local group and reach out to the healthcare communities in your area. CMDA is prepared to assist you in any way possible to make your venture a successful one. For further information or resource material, contact your Regional Director.