

HOSPITAL LIAISON COMMITTEE GUIDELINES – PROFESSIONAL EDITION (PART 1)

CHAPTER 1 – ORGANIZATIONAL STRUCTURE

To support Jehovah's Witness patients worldwide in maintaining their religious stance on abstaining from blood, the organization uses a multi-layered structure to coordinate medical, ethical, and logistical support.

Hospital Information Services (HIS)

HIS operates from the world headquarters, providing branches with up-to-date research on medical strategies that avoid donor blood. They review peer-reviewed medical literature, developments in technology, and publications in bioethics that affirm patient rights. This information is then made available to the branches, which use it to support Hospital Liaison Committees.

Hospital Information Department (HID)

Each national branch has an HID. This department:

- reviews and approves the appointment of HLC members
- determines how many HLCs are needed and where
- assigns territories
- oversees HLC operations, training, communication, and complex medical cases

Hospital Liaison Committees (HLC)

HLCs support baptized and unbaptized Witnesses—including inactive ones—who request help finding cooperative physicians or preparing for surgery or hospitalization. HLCs cultivate working relationships with medical professionals, social workers, legal professionals, and courts when needed.

Patient Visitation Groups (PVG)

PVGs focus on visiting hospitalized Witnesses, especially those transferred to major medical centers. Their work offers emotional support, assists communication with staff, and ensures special medical directives are understood.

CHAPTER 2 – APPOINTMENT AND TRAINING OF HLC MEMBERS

Qualifications

HLC members must be respected elders known for trustworthiness, compassion, discretion, and the ability to work under pressure. They must uphold high standards of confidentiality and teamwork. A medical background is helpful but not required. Members must be vaccinated against COVID-19 and willing to follow public health laws.

Conflicts of Interest

HLC members and their household cannot work for or run any bloodless surgery program, hospital-based management program, or similar initiative. The organization wants to avoid any perception of financial gain, pressure, or bias. Physicians or attorneys may serve only if their professional roles do not compromise the committee's neutrality.

Appointment Process

After an elder is considered, two HLC members—ideally including the coordinator—contact him to confirm willingness and availability. Contact information is collected and submitted to HID. Official appointment is communicated via standardized letters.

Training

New members receive formal training from the HLC, including:

- communication practices
- medical terminology relevant to blood management
- ethical considerations
- proper documentation
- relationship-building with hospitals

This concludes PART 1. Additional sections will be produced as separate PDF files and later merged into a complete final document.