Whereas, The AMA-SPS mission is to engage physicians age 65 and above, both active and retired, to promote policies, products and services relevant to senior physicians; and

Whereas, The number of seniors in the United States is growing exponentially, with currently 46 million people age 65 or older with the number expected to grow to 73 million in the next 15 years; and

Whereas, The “Baby Boomer” generation (generally accepted as birth dates between 1946 to 1964) is 74.9 million; and

Whereas, Large numbers of these groups live independently in retirement communities not subject to any state or federal regulations as are required for assisted living, extended care and nursing homes; and

Whereas, The AARP has published its second edition of “Where We Live: Communities for All Ages” with a focus on communities in the forefront in addressing the needs of an aging population; and

Whereas, Many senior physicians live in such communities and could be a resource for their communities in matters of health and wellness, enhancing the health of the community’s residents, were there a template of suggestions to guide their efforts; and

Whereas, Although there are guidelines for immunizations from the CDC and publications touting the validity of exercise programs for the elderly, they are not cohesive and in “one place”; and

Whereas, There are no guidelines for independent living communities (on activities) that could prevent communicable diseases or even save lives (e.g. alcohol/soap hand dispensers in communal areas, maintenance suggestions for decorative fountains and cooling towers, placement of AEDs [AEDs — automated external defibrillators — can be found in almost every school building and airport but how many are in senior living facilities?]); and

Whereas, Senior citizens have special needs that may include safety features (e.g. wider doorways, absence of area rugs, leveling of doorsills), accommodations for disabilities, improved bathroom accessibility and enhanced lighting; and
Whereas, Norman Cohen, MD, a respected orthopedic surgeon at Highland Park Hospital in Illinois for 30 years, who, upon retirement, then practiced orthopedics at the Navajo Indian Reservation in Arizona and New Mexico over a five-year period, who lived in a senior retirement community and, as a member of the AMA Senior Physicians Section, wished to continue helping his fellow residents by submitting this resolution before he passed away in February 2018; therefore be it

RESOLVED, That our American Medical Association, in cooperation with other interested parties such as the public health community, geriatric specialties, and AARP, study the development of a document that could guide best health practices for the senior independent living community. (Directive to Take Action)

Fiscal Note: Not yet determined

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References: