Whereas, The objects of the American Medical Association are to promote the science and art of medicine and the betterment of public health1; and

Whereas, The AMA Foundation’s Physician Disaster Recovery Fund directly supports physicians impacted by natural disasters and has created the Physician Disaster Recovery Fund to assist recovery efforts for both Texas and Florida2; and

Whereas, The people of Puerto Rico lack sufficient health care resources to facilitate their complete recovery from the devastation of Hurricanes Irma and Maria; and

Whereas, Physicians and health care providers in Puerto Rico continue to struggle to maintain operations to provide necessary medical care to the people of Puerto Rico; and

Whereas, Puerto Ricans are natural-born U.S. citizens, with nearly 3.4 million U.S. citizens residing on the island; roughly one in two Puerto Ricans, or 49% of the total population, are enrolled in the island’s Medicaid program; the 2016 median income is $20,078 in Puerto Rico, compared to national average of $57,617 for all other U.S. states; roughly 46% of Puerto Ricans are below the federal poverty level, compared to 15% of residents in all other U.S. states3; and

Whereas, The federal matching rate for Medicaid and CHIP is capped at a fixed rate of 55%, despite that the federal matching rate traditionally ranges from 50-83% based on a state’s per capita income4; and

Whereas, It is imperative that federal funding for Puerto Rico’s Medicaid program provides the local government support to meet the worsening medical and public health needs of its residents during these trying times and subsequent to Hurricanes Irma and Maria; and

Whereas, Many of Puerto Rico’s health care facilities and physician practices are still unable to access electricity, clean water, and face shortages of critical and life-saving medicines and medical devices5; and

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1 American Medical Association Constitution and bylaws (July 2017)
2 AMA News: Hurricane-relief effort aims to get practices back online ASAP
5 Statement by FDA Commissioner Scott Gottlieb, M.D. on medical device manufacturing recovery in Puerto Rico (October 20, 2017)
Whereas, The United States Congress is debating legislation to increase the statutory cap on  
Puerto Rico’s Medicaid program to the Administration’s requested level of roughly $1.6 billion  
for a period of at least five years, as well as hurricane relief efforts; therefore be it  

RESOLVED, That our American Medical Association urge and advocate the U.S. Congress to  
quickly pass legislation to fund Puerto Rico’s Medicaid Program of roughly $1.6 billion over five  
years (Directive to Take Action); and be it further  

RESOLVED, That our AMA urge and advocate for the Centers for Medicare and Medicaid  
Services to implement temporary emergency regulatory Medicare and Medicaid funding waivers  
to help restore access to health care services in Puerto Rico. (Directive to Take Action)  

Fiscal Note: Not yet determined  

Received: 11/02/17  

RELEVANT AMA POLICY  

Domestic Disaster Relief Funding D-130.966  
1. Our American Medical Association lobby Congress to a) reassess its policy for expedited release of funding to disaster areas; b) define areas of disaster with disproportionate indirect and direct consequences of disaster as "public health emergencies"; and c) explore a separate, less bureaucratic process for providing funding and resources to these areas in an effort to reduce morbidity and mortality post-disaster.  
2. Our AMA will lobby actively for the recommendations outlined in the AMA/APHA Linkages Leadership Summit including: a) appropriate funding and protection of public health and health care systems as critical infrastructures for responding to day-to-day emergencies and mass causality events; b) full integration and interoperable public health and health care disaster preparedness and response systems at all government levels; c) adequate legal protection in a disaster for public health and healthcare responders and d) incorporation of disaster preparedness and response competency-based education and training in undergraduate, graduate, post-graduate, and continuing education programs.  
Res. 421, A-11; Reaffirmation A-15  

Health System Security for Disasters H-130.999  
The AMA calls to the attention of the governors of the several states, and other officials, both state and local, under whose guidance the protection of the public is instilled, that the maintenance of medical treatment facilities and the care of all patients and hospital personnel in the event of a disaster is of prime basic importance, and that preliminary planning to provide such protection should be a part of every disaster program.  

Status Report on Expanding Health Care Coverage to all Individuals, with an Emphasis on the Uninsured D-165.955  
1. Our AMA will continue to: (1) place a high priority on expanding health insurance coverage for all; (2) pursue bipartisan support for individually selected and owned health insurance through the use of adequately funded federal tax credits as a preferred long-term solution for covering all; and (3) explore and support alternative means of ensuring health care coverage for all.  
2. Our AMA Board of Trustees will consider assisting Louisiana, and other Gulf Coast States if they should desire, in developing and evaluating a pilot project(s) utilizing AMA policy as a means of dealing with the impending public health crisis of displaced Medicaid enrollees and uninsured individuals as a result of the recent natural disasters in that region.  
CMS Rep. 1, I-05; Reaffirmed in lieu of Res. 101, A-13  

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6 Letter from Governor Rosselló Nevares to Congressional Leadership-Puerto Rico Health Care Situation