Whereas, Dementing illnesses including Alzheimer's disease, Lewy body dementia, vascular 
dementia and others often present with behavioral symptoms, including agitation, wandering, 
delusions, hallucinations and depression; and

Whereas, Dementing illnesses are increasingly an expensive and urgent cause of 
hospitalizations; and

Whereas, These symptoms will prompt emergency room physicians, neurologists, primary care 
physicians, families and others to refer these patients to psychiatric facilities for evaluation and 
treatment; and

Whereas, These patients with such symptoms cannot be managed in general medical hospital 
environments which do not have controlled access units or trained behavioral health personnel; 
and

Whereas, It requires trained psychiatric physicians to be able to distinguish which symptoms 
may be due to dementia versus other psychiatric illness, and to manage the medications and 
treatments necessary to safely improve a patient’s condition; and

Whereas, The Diagnostic and Statistical Manual of Psychiatric Illnesses lists the various 
dementias as illnesses treated by psychiatric physicians; and

Whereas, The Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services currently denies reimbursement for 
treatment of people with dementias treated in a psychiatric facility when it is a primary 
diagnosis; therefore be it

RESOLVED, That our American Medical Association urgently convene a task force with all 
interested stakeholders to promote appropriate payment by the Centers for Medicare and 
Medicaid Services and other third-party payers for treatment for all types of dementias when 
patients are treated in a Joint Commission accredited facility, whether a free-standing or part of 
a general medical facility, even when dementia is the primary diagnosis for admission. (Directive 
to Take Action)

Fiscal Note: Not yet determined

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