AMERICAN MEDICAL ASSOCIATION HOUSE OF DELEGATES

Resolution: 905 (I-17)

Introduced by: Medical Student Section

Subject: Addressing Social Media Usage and its Negative Impacts on Mental Health

Referred to: Reference Committee K
(L. Samuel Wann, MD, Chair)

Whereas, 71% of American teenagers use Facebook, 52% use Instagram, 41% use Snapchat, 24% of teens “go online almost constantly”, and 92% go online every day;¹ and

Whereas, 68% of all US adults use Facebook, with 76% of them saying they check it daily;² and

Whereas, Several recent studies indicate a link between increased use of social media and higher levels of anxiety and depression;³,⁴,⁵,⁶ and

Whereas, The American Academy of Pediatrics recognizes depression that develops when preteens and teens spend a great deal of time on social media sites, and advises parents to talk to their children and adolescents about their online use;⁷ and

Whereas, There are school-based mental health programs that have evidence of positive impact across a range of emotional and behavioral problems; however, there are few programs that address the association between social media usage and negative mental health sequelae;⁸,⁹ therefore be it

RESOLVED, That our American Medical Association collaborate with relevant professional organizations to (a) develop continuing education programs to enhance physicians’ knowledge of the health impacts of social media usage, and (b) develop effective clinical tools and protocols for the identification, treatment, and referral of children, adolescents, and adults at risk for and experiencing mental health sequelae of social media usage (Directive to Take Action); and be it further

RESOLVED, That our AMA advocate for schools to provide safe and effective educational programs by which students can learn to identify and mitigate the onset of mental health sequelae of social media usage. (New HOD Policy)

Fiscal Note: Not yet determined

Received: 09/12/17

RELEVANT AMA POLICY

Reduction of Online Bullying H-515.959

Internet Pornography: Protecting Children and Youth Who Use the Internet and Social Media H-60.934

Bullying Behaviors Among Children and Adolescents H-60.943

Providing Medical Services through School-Based Health Programs H-60.991

Awareness, Diagnosis and Treatment of Depression and other Mental Illnesses H-345.984

Increasing Detection of Mental Illness and Encouraging Education D-345.994