Whereas, Consistent increases in the life expectancy of the population of a country are expected and considered an indication of effective public health systems and health care and socio-economic well-being; and

Whereas, Life expectancy for the U.S. population decreased by 0.1 year from 2014 (78.9 years) to 2015 (78.8 years), including a decrease of 0.2 years (76.5 years to 76.3 years) for males and a decrease of 0.1 years (81.3 years to 81.2 years) for females; and

Whereas, U.S. life expectancy is now lower than in most high-income countries and this gap is projected to increase, and

Whereas, Continuous decline in the age-adjusted death rate for the total population of a country is expected and considered a sign of public health progress, good health care, and socio-economic well-being; and

Whereas, From 2014 to 2015, the age-adjusted death rate for the total population rose significantly for the first time since 1999, increasing by 1.2%, with age-adjusted death rate increases for non-Hispanic white males, non-Hispanic white females, and non-Hispanic black males; and

Whereas, Between 1999 and 2014, premature mortality increased in white individuals and in American Indians and Alaska Natives, and given that the magnitude of annual mortality increases in the USA is extremely unusual in high-income countries, a rapid public health response is needed to avert further premature deaths; therefore be it

RESOLVED, That our American Medical Association raise awareness of the recent reversals in the improvement of overall death rates and life expectancy with the message that these new problems in the United States are different from all other developed countries and that these trends need to be reversed promptly (Directive to Take Action); and be it further

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RESOLVED, That our AMA call on the legislative and executive branches of the Federal Government to fund and carry out investigations into the causes of these very unusual decreases in life expectancy and increases in death rates in order to design multi-disciplinary interventions to reverse these troubling changes. (Directive to Take Action); and be it further

RESOLVED, That our AMA encourage state and local medical societies to raise awareness of the new problems of decreasing life expectancy and increasing population death rates as indicators of major public health problems and advocate for local investigation of the causes and remedies for these disturbing problems. (New HOD Policy)

Fiscal Note: Not yet determined

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