Whereas, The current 9-1-1 system is primarily built upon an infrastructure that does not uniformly support modern communications technologies including texting, geolocation, and images;¹ ² and

Whereas, Current 9-1-1 infrastructure has continuously been shown to be vulnerable to preventable outages and cyberattacks, which have already temporarily left thousands without access to emergency services;³ ⁴ ⁵ and

Whereas, The Federal Communications Commission (FCC) has already recommended that Congress increase federal incentives to boost state and local 9-1-1 modernization efforts;⁶ and

Whereas Internet protocol (IP)-based communication technologies allow the transmission of data over the internet, allowing for increased information (such as text and geolocation) to be obtained by the receiver compared to old circuit-switch communication;⁷ and

Whereas, Congress has failed to nationally incorporate IP based technology into existing 9-1-1 infrastructure, which may lead to inaccurate caller location accuracy on calls over wireline in multiple situations;⁸ and

Whereas, 95% of Americans own at least one cellphone, 77% own at least one smartphone, and over 70% of all 9-1-1 calls are made from cellphones and other handheld devices;⁹ ¹⁰ and

Whereas, While the IP-based geolocation accuracy of handheld devices averages about 4.9 meters, current U.S. standards merely mandate that 67% of 9-1-1 calls are accurate within range of 50 meters, a standard that has not been updated since 2012;¹¹ ¹² and

² Next Generation 9-1-1 Advancement Act of 2011, 47 U.S.C §158. (2012)
¹¹ 911 service, 47 C.F.R. § 20.18(h) (2012).
Whereas, Increased 9-1-1 response times, due to factors such as imprecise call tracking, can lead to increased morbidity in cardiac arrest;13 and

Whereas, The Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990 mandates that 9-1-1 services need only receive message-based communication from teletypewriters (TTYs), devices which are distinct and may be incompatible with modern mobile and smartphones;14, 15 and

Whereas, Approximately 50 million Americans have hearing disabilities, and 7.5 million Americans have difficulty vocalizing words;16, 17 and

Whereas, The FCC found a majority of those with hearing and speech disabilities have discarded their TTYs in favor of mobile plans with SMS services, leaving millions with these disabilities at risk of not being able to effectively communicate with 9-1-1 operators;15 and

Whereas, Nationally, 9-1-1 call centers are not mandated to accept SMS messages (text-to-911), meaning that a citizen’s locale may dictate the amount of emergency services they have access to;16 and

Whereas, The National Association of the Deaf (NAD) and the Hearing Loss Association of America (HLAA) both acknowledge that the existing 9-1-1 infrastructure limits the ability of those with deafness or hearing loss to contact emergency services;19, 20 and

Whereas, The NAD and HLAA both support continued modernization of 9-1-1 services, including the continued implementation of text-to-911;19, 20 and

Whereas, Our AMA has adopted policy encouraging guidelines that protect against the reallocation of 9-1-1 funding to unrelated programs (H-440.822), but does not currently encourage the continued modernization of 9-1-1 services; therefore be it

RESOLVED, That our American Medical Association support the funding of federal grant programs for the modernization of the 9-1-1 infrastructure, including incorporation of text to 911 technology. (New HOD Policy)

Fiscal note: not yet determined

Date Received: 09/24/18

RELEVANT AMA POLICY

Accountability of 911 Emergency Services Funding H-440.822
Our AMA encourages federal guidelines and state legislation that protects against reallocation of 911 funding to unrelated services.
Citation: Res. 220, A-17

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