Whereas, Almost a fourth of men and women between the age of 18 and 50 currently have a tattoo; and

Whereas, The Food and Drug Administration regulates cosmetics, which are generally pigments used on the surface of the skin, but does not regulate tattoo and permanent makeup inks which are pigments injected with needles below the skin’s surface; and

Whereas, Some risks, such as the spread of infections through the use of unsterilized needles, have long been known; and

Whereas, The long term safety of permanent tattoo inks has not been previously studied; and

Whereas, Research has also shown that some pigment migrates from the tattoo site to the body’s lymph nodes; and

Whereas, Many pigments used in tattoo inks are industrial-grade colors suitable for printers’ ink or automobile paint; and

Whereas, Azo pigments, the organic pigments making up about 60% of the colorants in tattoo inks are not of health concern while chemically intact, they can degrade with the help of bacteria or ultraviolet light and potentially can turn into cancer-causing primary aromatic amines; and

Whereas, Some surveys show that up to 50% of tattoo owners come to regret getting a tattoo; and

Whereas, Lasers are often used to blast apart pigments, sending problematic degradation products into the body and researchers do not know how the degradation products are distributed in the body or how they get excreted; and

Whereas, A study by the Australian government’s National Industrial Chemical’s Notification and Assessment Scheme (NICNAS) showed the presence of polycyclic aromatic hydrocarbons (PAHs), a group of chemicals known to be carcinogens in more than one-fifth of 49 inks tested and in 83% of the black inks tested; and

Whereas, Tattoo inks may also contain potentially harmful metal impurities such as chromium, nickel, copper, and cobalt; and

Whereas, Manufacturers of tattoo and permanent makeup inks in the United States are often protected from divulging the ingredients of tattoo inks under the guise of considering them ‘trademark secrets’; and
Whereas, In 2008, the Council of Europe, an organization focused on promoting human rights and the integration of regulatory functions in the continent, recommended policies to ensure the safety of tattoos and permanent makeup, which advocate the banning of sixty-two hazardous chemicals, as well as guidelines which include that tattoo and permanent makeup products should contain the following information on the packaging: the name and address of the manufacturer or the person responsible for placing the product on the market, the date of minimum durability, the conditions of use and warnings, the batch number or other reference used by the manufacturer for batch identification, the list of ingredients according to their International Union of Pure and Applied Chemistry (IUPAC) name, CAS Number (chemical Abstract Service of the American Chemical Society) or Colour index (CI) number, and the guarantee of sterility of the contents; and

Whereas, AMA policy H-440.909, “Regulation of Tattoo Artists and Facilities,” currently only encourages the state regulation of tattoo artists and tattoo facilities to ensure adequate procedures to protect the public health, and encourages physicians to report all adverse reactions associated with tattooing to the Food and Drug Administration MedWatch program; and

Whereas, Current regulation of tattoo and permanent makeup inks in the United States performed at state or provincial levels generate a wide variety of guidelines and hygiene standards; therefore be it

RESOLVED, That our American Medical Association encourage the Food and Drug Administration to adopt regulatory standards for tattoo and permanent makeup inks that include at minimum the disclosures expected for injectable drugs and cosmetics and mandate that this information be available to both the body licensed to perform the tattoo and to the person receiving the tattoo (New HOD Policy); and be it further

RESOLVED, That our AMA study the safety of any chemical in tattoo and permanent makeup inks. (Directive to Take Action)

Fiscal Note: not yet determined

Received: 09/27/18

References:
2 https://www.fda.gov/ForConsumers/ConsumerUpdates/ucm048919.htm
5 https://search.coe.int/cm/Pages/result_details.aspx?ObjectID=09000016805d3dc4

RELEVANT AMA POLICY

H-440.909 Regulation of Tattoo Artists and Facilities
The AMA encourages the state regulation of tattoo artists and tattoo facilities to ensure adequate procedures to protect the public health; and encourages physicians to report all adverse reactions associated with tattooing to the Food and Drug Administration MedWatch program. (Res. 506, A-96; Reaffirmed: CSAPH Rep. 3, A-06; Reaffirmed: CSAPH Rep. 01, A-16)

H-440.934 Adequacy of Sterilization in Commercial Enterprises
The AMA requests that state health departments ensure the adequacy of sterilization of instruments used in commercial enterprises (tattoo parlors, beauty salons, barbers, manicurists, etc.) because of the danger of exchange of infected blood-contaminated fluids. (Sub. Res. 409, I-92; Reaffirmed: CSA Rep. 8, A-03; Modified: CSAPH Rep. 1, A-13)