Whereas, Self-induced abortion involves women attempting to induce abortion without medical assistance1; and

Whereas, Laws criminalizing self-induced abortion increase health risks and deter patients from seeking necessary healthcare services related to self-induced abortion or miscarriage2; and

Whereas, Laws criminalizing patients who self-induce abortion lead to increased suspicion towards patients presenting to healthcare providers for miscarriage3; and

Whereas, From the beginning of 2011 through July 2016, states enacted 334 new legal restrictions on abortion, further limiting access to abortion care. In 2018 alone, 695 provisions have already been introduced to further restrict abortion4; and

Whereas, National studies of abortion patients have shown that approximately 2% of patients attempted to self-induce an abortion at some point in their lives. That number is higher in states such as Texas with stricter legal restrictions on abortion, where one study showed that 7% of patients attempted some method to end their pregnancy before presenting to the clinic5; and

Whereas, Google search trends from 2005 and 2015 have shown a relative increase in searches for self-induced abortion that correlate with state-based abortion restrictions6; and

Whereas, There were more than 700,000 Google searches looking into self-induced abortions in 20157; and

Whereas, A recent online study of 1,235 people who google searched “self-abortion” revealed that almost three-quarters (73%) indicated that they were searching for information because they were pregnant and did not or may not want to be8; and

Whereas, Self-induced abortion is significantly associated with post-abortion complications, maternal morbidity and mortality9; and

Whereas, The ability and willingness to access medical care if complications relating to self-induced abortion arise are essential for patient safety10; and

Whereas, People of color are disproportionately targeted for prosecution and criminalization related to pregnancy outcomes11; and
Whereas, The American College of Obstetricians and Gynecologists (ACOG) has taken a very strong position that women should not be prosecuted for trying to end their own pregnancies. ACOG additionally opposes forcing physicians to share information about patients due to its burdensome interference in the patient-provider relationship; therefore be it

RESOLVED, That our American Medical Association oppose the criminalization of self-induced abortion as it increases patients’ medical risks and deters patients from seeking medically necessary services (New HOD Policy); and be it further

RESOLVED, That our AMA advocate against any legislative efforts to criminalize self-induced abortion. (New HOD Policy)

Fiscal note: Minimal - less than $1,000.

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References:
3. Ibid.

Relevant AMA Policy:
- Right to Privacy in Termination of Pregnancy H-5.993
- Pregnancy Termination H-5.983
- Opinion 4.2.7 Abortion
- H-5.995 Abortion
- H-160.946 The Criminalization of Health Care Decision Making