Whereas, The U.S. is the most heavily incarcerated country in the developed world, and five
million, or approximately 7% of American children, have an incarcerated parent¹;²; and
Whereas, Parental imprisonment is recognized as one of several known Adverse Childhood
Experiences (ACE), with 64% of children with incarcerated parents experiencing two or more
additional adverse events including substance abuse, mental illness, and sexual abuse¹;³; and
Whereas, Poor health outcomes in children associated with the exposure to parental
incarceration include forgone health care, prescription drug abuse, ten or more lifetime sexual
partners, higher likelihood of emergency department use, illicit injection drug use, HIV/AIDS,
obesity, and behavioral or conduct problems¹;²;⁴; and
Whereas, Although efforts have been made to mitigate the harm associated with having an
incarcerated parent, few are focused on meeting the direct health needs of children through
preventative health care⁵; and
Whereas, Children with incarcerated parents may benefit from initial ACE screening to identify
those who require further assessment, health behavioral counseling, or the establishment of a
medical home to help them gain access to care²;⁶; therefore be it
RESOLVED, That our American Medical Association support comprehensive and evidence-
based care that addresses the specific healthcare needs of children with incarcerated parents
and promote earlier intervention for those children who are at risk. (New HOD Policy)

Fiscal Note: Not yet determined

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³ Felitti VJ, Anda RF, Nordenberg D, et al. Relationship of childhood abuse and household dysfunction to many of the leading
⁴ Turney, K. Stress proliferation across generations? Examining the relationship between parental Incarceration and childhood
⁶ Barnert E, Chung PJ. Responding to parental incarceration as a priority pediatric health issue. Pediatrics. 2018; 142(3).
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