Whereas, AMA policy recognizes the grave and urgent risks to human health posed by global climate change and "supports educating the medical community on the potential adverse public health effects of global climate change and incorporating the health implications of climate change into the spectrum of medical education" (AMA Policy H-135.938); and

Whereas, Experts have stated that, "climate change and health education should be rapidly integrated into U.S. health professional curricula and continuing medical education" but medical schools have been slow to proceed because there is not a broad consensus as to what information to include, how to add this to the curriculum, and what information might be displaced if climate change were added1; and

Whereas, The Global Consortium on Climate and Health Education published in March 2018 the paper "Climate and Health Core Competencies", an institutional guide to climate change educational content for medical schools, which supports adding topics of climate change into medical school curricula2; and

Whereas, The AMA is uniquely positioned to influence accreditation bodies and medical schools to introduce quickly a minimum standard of climate change education for all medical students; therefore be it

RESOLVED, That our American Medical Association recommend that one hour of teaching on climate change, “The Climate Change Lecture”, be required for all medical students before graduation with the M.D. or D.O. degree as a minimum standard, with more than one hour of teaching encouraged for medical schools that so choose (Directive to Take Action); and be it further

RESOLVED, That our AMA recommend that the goals of “The Climate Change Lecture” be for medical students upon graduation to have a basic knowledge of the science of climate change, to be able to describe the risks that climate change poses to human health, and be prepared to advise patients how to protect themselves from the health risks posed by climate change (Directive to Take Action); and be it further

RESOLVED, That our AMA recommend that medical schools be exempted from the requirement of “The Climate Change Lecture” that have already implemented pedagogy on this topic that amounts to an hour or more of required learning on climate change and health for medical students (Directive to Take Action); and be it further

RESOLVED, That our AMA prepare a prototype PowerPoint slide presentation and lecture notes for “The Climate Change Lecture”, which could be used by medical schools, or schools may create their own lecture, video or online course to fulfill the requirements of “The Climate Change Lecture” (Directive to Take Action); and be it further

RESOLVED, That our AMA write to the Commission on Osteopathic College Accreditation (COCA) which is the accrediting organization for schools offering the D.O. degree in the United States; to the Liaison Committee on Medical Education (LCME), which is the accrediting organization for schools offering the M.D. degree in the United States (including for the Uniformed Services University of the Health Sciences); and to the LCME representative from the AMA Medical Student Section, to recommend that “The Climate Change Lecture”, using AMA’s prototype PowerPoint presentation and notes, or other formats, become a requirement for all M.D. and D.O. degrees for United States medical schools beginning with 2021 graduates (Directive to Take Action); and be it further

RESOLVED, That our AMA delegation to the World Medical Association present a similar resolution to the World Medical Association recommending the concept of the “The Climate Change Lecture” for medical schools worldwide. (Directive to Take Action)

Fiscal Note: Not yet determined

Received: 04/30/19

Other Resources:


RELEVANT AMA POLICY

Global Climate Change and Human Health H-135.938
Our AMA:
1. Supports the findings of the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change’s fourth assessment report and concurs with the scientific consensus that the Earth is undergoing adverse global climate change and that anthropogenic contributions are significant. These climate changes will create conditions that affect public health, with disproportionate impacts on vulnerable populations, including children, the elderly, and the poor.
2. Supports educating the medical community on the potential adverse public health effects of global climate change and incorporating the health implications of climate change into the spectrum of medical education, including topics such as population displacement, heat waves and drought, flooding, infectious and vector-borne diseases, and potable water supplies.
3. (a) Recognizes the importance of physician involvement in policymaking at the state, national, and global level and supports efforts to search for novel, comprehensive, and economically sensitive approaches to mitigating climate change to protect the health of the public; and (b) recognizes that whatever the etiology of global climate change, policymakers should work to reduce human contributions to such changes.
4. Encourages physicians to assist in educating patients and the public on environmentally sustainable practices, and to serve as role models for promoting environmental sustainability.
5. Encourages physicians to work with local and state health departments to strengthen the public health infrastructure to ensure that the global health effects of climate change can be anticipated and responded to more efficiently, and that the AMA’s Center for Public Health Preparedness and Disaster Response assist in this effort.

Citation: (CSAPH Rep. 3, I-08; Reaffirmation A-14)