Whereas, During 1999–2017, the rate of drug overdose deaths approximately tripled with approximately 70,000 overdose deaths occurring nationally in 2017, nearly 68 percent involving an opioid; and

Whereas, By 2017, fentanyl was involved in 57 percent of all drug overdose deaths in New York City; and

Whereas, Illicitly manufactured fentanyl (a synthetic, short–acting opioid with 50 – 100 times the potency of morphine) has been mixed into heroin, cocaine, and counterfeit pills with or without the users' knowledge, and has increased the risk of fatal overdose; and

Whereas, Benzodiazepines, often used to aid in relieving symptoms like anxiety, are schedule IV substances available through a physician with a high risk for illicit use; and

Whereas, Illicit use of benzodiazepines is becoming more common—especially in teens and young adults; and

Whereas, Benzodiazepines used in excess, can lead to memory loss, dulled emotions, compulsive actions, personality changes and can lead to fatal overdose; and

Whereas, More than 30 percent of overdoses involving opioids also involve benzodiazepines which include diazepam (Valium), alprazolam (Xanax), and clonazepam (Klonopin), and others; and

Whereas, The dangers of co–prescribing opioids and benzodiazepines has been well known for many years; and

Whereas, The illegal drug market has been producing illicit alprazolam laced with illicit fentanyl leading to addiction and overdose death; therefore be it

RESOLVED, That our American Medical Association raise the awareness of its members of the increased use of illicit sedative/opioid combinations leading to addiction and overdose death (Directive to Take Action); and be it further

RESOLVED, That our AMA warn members and patients about this public health problem. (Directive to Take Action)

Fiscal Note: Not yet determined
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