

# SUBJECT TO RESOLUTION COMMITTEE REVIEW

## AMERICAN MEDICAL ASSOCIATION HOUSE OF DELEGATES

Resolution: 413  
(November 2020)

Introduced by: Organized Medical Staff Section

Subject: Protecting Healthcare Professionals in Society

Referred to: Reference Committee D

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1 Whereas, The American Medical Association's commitment to improving physician professional  
2 satisfaction and practice sustainability is a cornerstone of AMA's strategic plan and the AMA  
3 has developed policies supporting physician well-being; and  
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5 Whereas, There is growing evidence of increasing violence against physicians and other  
6 healthcare workers, as well as public health officials, in the COVID-19 era worldwide and in the  
7 United States<sup>1-5</sup>; and  
8

9 Whereas, Even before the advent of COVID-19, there was growing violence against physicians  
10 and other healthcare workers both worldwide and in the United States<sup>6-12</sup>; and  
11

12 Whereas, There is incomplete information on the extent of, and potential strategies to combat  
13 violence against physicians and healthcare workers in various settings<sup>13-16</sup>; and  
14

15 Whereas, Attacks on physicians and other health care workers have deleterious effects not only  
16 on the affected individual, but society as a whole<sup>17-20</sup>; and  
17

18 Whereas, Many efforts to date to combat violence against physicians and other health care  
19 workers in various settings have been scattered and incomplete<sup>21-25</sup>; and  
20

21 Whereas, Specific legal protection to deter violence against physicians and other health care  
22 workers is one available level of protection<sup>26-31</sup>; and  
23

24 Whereas, International health organizations have studied violence against health care workers  
25 with outlined pathways to deal with it, including indemnification of health care workers<sup>32-37</sup>; and  
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27 Whereas, The AMA does not currently have policy specifically addressing violence against  
28 physicians outside the "workplace;" therefore be it

29 RESOLVED, That our American Medical Association acknowledge and act to reduce the  
30 incidence of antagonistic actions against health care professionals outside as well as within the  
31 workplace, including physical violence, intimidating actions of word or deed, and cyber-attacks,  
32 particularly those which appear motivated simply by their identification as a health care  
33 professional (Directive to Take Action); and be it further  
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35 RESOLVED, That our AMA educate the general public on the prevalence of violence and  
36 personal harassment against health care professionals, outside as well as within the workplace  
37 (Directive to Take Action); and be it further

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- 1 RESOLVED, That our AMA work with all interested stakeholders to improve safety of health
- 2 care workers including first responders and public health officials and prevent violence to health
- 3 care professionals (Directive to Take Action).

Fiscal Note:

Received: 11/8/2020

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## RELEVANT AMA POLICY

### **Violence and Abuse Prevention in the Health Care Workplace H-515.966**

Our AMA encourages all health care facilities to: adopt policies to reduce and prevent all forms of workplace violence and abuse; develop a reporting tool that is easy for workers to find and complete; develop policies to assess and manage reported occurrences of workplace violence and abuse; make training courses on workplace violence prevention available to employees and consultants; and include physicians in safety and health committees.

### **Preventing Violent Acts Against Health Care Providers H-515.957**

Our AMA: (1) encourages the Occupational Safety and Health Administration to develop and enforce a standard addressing workplace violence prevention in health care and social service industries; (2) encourages Congress to provide additional funding to the National Institute for Occupational Safety and Health to further evaluate programs and policies to prevent violence against health care workers; and (3) encourages the National Institute for Occupational Safety and Health to adapt the content of their online continuing education course on workplace violence for nurses into a continuing medical education course for physicians.

### **Preventing Violent Acts Against Health Care Providers D-515.983**

Our AMA will (a) continue to work with other appropriate organizations to prevent acts of violence against health care providers and improve the safety and security of providers while engaged in caring for patients; and (b) widely disseminate information on effective workplace violence prevention interventions in the health care setting as well as opportunities for training.

**Violent Acts Against Physicians H-515.982**

Our AMA (1) condemns acts of violence against physicians involved in the legal practice of medicine; (2) will continue to take an active interest in the apprehension and prosecution of those persons committing assaults on physicians as a result of the physician's acting in a professional capacity; (3) will continue to monitor state legislative efforts on increased criminal penalties for assaults against health care providers; and (4) will continue to work with interested state and national medical specialty societies through all appropriate avenues, including state legislatures, when issues related to workplace violence inside and outside of the emergency department arise.

DRAFT