Whereas, The medical condition known as “Renal Failure” (RF) or “Kidney Failure” designates a
diseased state of a patient’s renal system in which the kidneys’ filtration function and ability to
excrete solute waste has become compromised, yet has not necessarily deteriorated to the
point that the kidneys are totally nonfunctional; and

Whereas, This diseased state is not termed Renal Failure or Kidney Failure in various Romance
languages, but rather, it is named by words that would be translated into English as “Renal
Insufficiency” or “Kidney Insufficiency”; and

Whereas, The terms for these diseases in the ICD-10 classification include “Renal Insufficiency”
and “Chronic Kidney Disease”; and

Whereas, The terms “Renal Insufficiency” or “Kidney Insufficiency” would more accurately
describe most instances of this diseased state of renal function, except for instances in which
the patient is anuric; and

Whereas, The term “Renal Failure” or “Kidney Failure” can be needlessly terrifying to patients,
who can easily misconstrue that their kidneys have experienced or are at immediate risk of
experiencing a total cessation of function, conveying a mistaken impression of a high risk of
need for immediate dialysis and even a high risk for imminent death; and

Whereas, This type of nomenclature change has precedent in the medical field—for example,
the term “Nuclear Magnetic Resonance” (NMR) was changed to “Magnetic Resonance Imaging”
(MRI) after the Three Mile Island nuclear accident, as the term “nuclear” had acquired significant
negative connotations for a sizable portion of the population; therefore be it

RESOLVED, That our American Medical Association advocate to the American Society of
Nephrology that the terms “Renal Failure” or “Kidney Failure” be replaced by the terms “Renal
Insufficiency” or “Kidney Insufficiency,” for use when discussing this disease with members of
medical care teams and with patients or their families in the United States (Directive to Take
Action).

Fiscal Note: Not yet determined

Received: TBD

RELEVANT AMA POLICY