

AMERICAN MEDICAL ASSOCIATION ORGANIZED MEDICAL STAFF SECTION

Resolution: 5
(June 2022)

Introduced by: Alan Klitzke, MD

Subject: Creation of United Nations "Dr. Saul Hertz Theranostic Nuclear Medicine" International Day

Referred to: OMSS Reference Committee
(xxxx, MD, Chair)

1 WHEREAS, the General Assembly of the United Nations advocates for proclaiming International
2 days of recognition to highlight specific values of worldwide human interest; and
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4 WHEREAS, The United Nations General Assembly documents describe the purpose of
5 proclaiming "International Days" as follows: "International days are occasions to educate the
6 general public on issues of concern, to mobilize political will and resources to address global
7 problems, and to celebrate and reinforce achievements of humanity;" and
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9 WHEREAS, Last year physicians and patients celebrated 80 years from the first recorded use of
10 radioiodine therapy to treat human disease; and
11
12 WHEREAS, Saul Hertz, MD (1905 – 1950) discovered the medical uses of radionuclides, and
13 his breakthrough work with radioactive iodine (RAI) created a dynamic paradigm change
14 integrating the sciences of physics, biology, physiology, and medicine; and
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16 WHEREAS, Treatment of disease by radioactive iodine marks the initial use radionuclide
17 targeted cancer therapies, now known as "theranostic" therapy; and
18
19 WHEREAS, In early 1941, Dr. Hertz administered the first therapeutic treatment of cyclotron-
20 produced radioactive iodine at the Massachusetts General Hospital, which led to the first series
21 of 29 patients with hyperthyroidism being treated successfully with RAI; and
22
23 WHEREAS, This work generating and utilizing radioactive material for medical therapy leaves
24 an enduring legacy, impacting countless generations of patients, numerous institutions
25 worldwide and setting the cornerstone for the field of nuclear medicine, and has for all future
26 generations augmented and forever altered the approach to medical therapies, utilizing cell
27 receptor biology; and
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29 WHEREAS, This novel work marks the advent of what we now recognize as modern medicine,
30 utilizing molecular medicine and the ever-evolving promise of targeted molecular therapies for
31 the treatment of human disease; and
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33 WHEREAS, This resolution was held back during the last three meetings of the American
34 Medical Association due to the special meeting designation of these meetings and could not be
35 considered as part of a commemoration of the 80th anniversary of the first radioiodine therapy;
36 and
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1 WHEREAS, To appropriately recognize and honor and celebrate this extraordinary
2 accomplishment of groundbreaking scientific and medical breakthrough 81 years later; and
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4 WHEREAS, Antisemitic attitudes and policies during the 1940s and beyond, at his institution
5 and throughout the United States, were largely successful in allowing others to take credit for
6 Saul Hertz's ideas and work in creating this monumental medical advancement during his
7 lifetime and for much of the time since his death; and
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9 WHEREAS, According to one expert, certain individuals misappropriated Dr. Hertz's work and
10 published it as their own: "Chapman and Evans had basically stolen his (Hertz's) work... the
11 most flagrant, unethical, academically reprehensible behavior...worst yet, Saul Hertz died... in
12 1950 and these two gentlemen (Chapman and Evans) spent a great deal of time and effort
13 rewriting history" (expert from Massachusetts General Hospital Chairman Emeritus, Department
14 of Radiology address, April 2016), and;
15
16 WHEREAS, Relatively recent validation of all the records and data created by his novel
17 discoveries kept secure by his daughter validates Dr. Hertz as the sole initiator of the concept of
18 targeted radioiodine therapy and inventor of radiotherapy dosimetry, marking the advent of
19 conceptual and practical "theranostics;" and
20
21 WHEREAS, Saul Hertz's daughter, Dr. Barbara Hertz, is alive today and can enjoy this honor of
22 her father's enduring work ad his living legacy; and
23
24 WHEREAS, The United States and the world are currently in a period of escalating attacks on
25 science and medicine; and
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27 WHEREAS, The creation of the day by the United Nations honoring a monumental advance in
28 medical science can help sway the pervasive anti-science movement to take notice and rethink;
29 and
30
31 WHEREAS, This effort can provide a way for our House of Medicine during its advocacy for this
32 International Day of medical scientific achievement to champion the human benefits throughout
33 the world realized by basic concepts of science; therefore be it
34
35 RESOLVED, That our American Medical Association advocate and participate with the United
36 States Mission to the United Nations, through the office of Ambassador Linda Thomas-
37 Greenfield, to create and introduce a United Nations General Assembly Resolution for the
38 creation of a new United Nations International Day of recognition, marking March 31 as: "Dr.
39 Saul Hertz Theranostic Nuclear Medicine Day," commemorating the day the first patient was
40 treated with therapeutic radionuclide therapy on that day in 1941, marking the beginning of
41 theranostic treatment of medical diseases, thus creating an international day when healthcare
42 workers and patients around the world celebrate scientific discovery and the future promises of
43 the science of medicine" (Directive to Take Action).

Fiscal Note: Not yet determined

Received: 5/15/2022

RELEVANT AMA POLICY

AMA Support for the United Nations Convention on The Rights of the Child (H-60.952)

Our AMA supports the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child and urges the Administration and Congress to support the Convention by ratifying it after considering any appropriate Reservations, Understandings, and Declarations.

Citation: BOT Rep. 44, A-96; Reaffirmed: Res. 2, I-00; Reaffirmed: CSAPH Rep. 1, A-10;
Reaffirmed: CSAPH Rep. 01, A-20

Elimination of Anti-Personnel Landmines (H-520.989)

Our AMA: (1) urges the US government to renounce its claimed exceptions to a ban on anti-personnel landmines; (2) encourages the US government and all members of the United Nations, as well as other interested charitable and medical organizations to contribute funds for the care, treatment and rehabilitation of landmine trauma victims; and (3) endorses a domestic and international ban on the manufacture, stockpiling, sale and use of anti-personnel landmines, and urges the President and the US Congress to work toward the achievement of this goal.

Citation: Res. 424, I-96; Res. 619, A-97; Res. 628, A-97; Reaffirmed: CSAPH Rep. 3, A-07;
Modified: SCAPH Rep. 01, A-17