

SUBJECT TO RESOLUTION COMMITTEE REVIEW

AMERICAN MEDICAL ASSOCIATION HOUSE OF DELEGATES

Resolution: 021
(N-21)

Introduced by: Louisiana

Subject: Free Speech and Civil Discourse in the American Medical Association

Referred to: Reference Committee on Amendments to Constitution and Bylaws

1 Whereas, On June 1, 2021, Dr. Russ Kridel, Chair, AMA Board of Trustees, issued a message
2 to the members of the American Medical Association House of Delegates regarding certain
3 recent events pertaining to discussion of the AMA's *Organizational Strategic Plan to Embed*
4 *Racial Justice and Advance Health Equity*; and
5

6 Whereas, As noted by Dr. Kridel, "Our House has always dealt with challenging topics with the
7 same professionalism that we try to exhibit daily as practicing physicians". However, many at
8 recent meetings of the AMA House, particularly those held virtually, we have witnessed some
9 loss of professionalism in regard to comments regarding the strategic plan. Some members of
10 our House are being personally attacked and threatened by others for their thoughts and ideas.
11 Name calling, unsettling calls to family members, and other unprofessional communications
12 have occurred;" and
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14 Whereas, In light of recent deterioration in civility and professionalism in policy debate and
15 discussion at the American Medical Association, the Louisiana Delegation to the AMA
16 developed and submitted Late Resolution 1003 at the June meeting calling for enhanced
17 standards of dignity, respect, tolerance and professionalism in AMA policy debate and
18 discussions; and
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20 Whereas, Louisiana-submitted Late Resolution 1003 was recommended for acceptance as
21 business of the House of Delegates by the AMA HOD Committee on Rules and Credentials,
22 and was recommended as meeting the priority threshold and recommended for acceptance as
23 business by the AMA HOD Resolution Committee; and
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25 Whereas, The AMA House of Delegates refused to consider Late Resolution 1003, thereby
26 failing to address the recent deterioration in civility and professionalism characterizing AMA
27 policy debate and discussion; therefore be it
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29 RESOLVED, That it be the policy of our American Medical Association that:

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31 Our American Medical Association unequivocally commits to truly open discourse,
32 debate, exchange of ideas, and argument;
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34 Our American Medical Association unequivocally commits to a culture which
35 recognizes the inherent dignity and worth of its members, which resolves that
36 freedom of expression and civility must coexist, and where those who disagree will do
37 so without enmity;

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1 Our American Medical Association unequivocally commits to the principle that
2 dissenting and unpopular voices must be afforded the opportunity to be heard;

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4 Our American Medical Association unequivocally commits that members of the
5 American Medical Association of different faiths, philosophies, and persuasions may
6 speak their minds and honor their deepest convictions without fear of punishment or
7 retaliation;

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9 Our American Medical Association unequivocally commits that the mere exposure to
10 ideas that some may find offensive is not an act of violence or hatred;

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12 Our American Medical Association unequivocally commits to a prohibition of the
13 listing of people or organizations to be regarded as unacceptable, untrustworthy,
14 excluded, or avoided based on ideological positions or differences;

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16 Our American Medical Association unequivocally commits that ideological
17 demonization of opponents to block debate and to silence disagreement in the
18 proceedings of the American Medical Association is unprofessional conduct subject to
19 appropriate disciplinary action;

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21 Our American Medical Association unequivocally commits that defamation, obscenity,
22 intimidation, threats, and incitement to violence, have no place in the proceedings of
23 the American Medical Association, and if exhibited are unprofessional conduct subject
24 to appropriate disciplinary action. (New HOD Policy)

Fiscal Note: Not yet determined

Received: 10/13/21

AUTHORS STATEMENT OF PRIORITY

On June 1, 2021, Russ Kridel, MD, Chair, AMA Board of Trustees, issued a message to the members of the American Medical Association House of Delegates regarding certain recent events pertaining to the AMA's *Organizational Strategic Plan to Embed Racial Justice and Advance Health Equity, 2021–2023*. As noted by Dr. Kridel, "Our House has always dealt with challenging topics with the same professionalism that we try to exhibit daily as practicing physicians". However, many at recent meetings of the AMA House, particularly those held virtually, we have witnessed a loss of professionalism during comments regarding the Strategic Plan. Some members of our House are being personally attacked and threatened by others for their thoughts and ideas. Name calling, unsettling calls to family members, and other unprofessional communications have occurred. As the strategic plan will once again be discussed at the November 2021 meeting, the debate and hopefully the adoption of these policies and principles are paramount in order to have a professional and courteous conversation regarding the production and contents of the equity report. We believe the Speakers saw this firsthand during the June meeting.

¹ Russ Kridel, "A Communication from the Board Chair," email of June 1, 2021 (copy on file with author).