

SUBJECT TO RESOLUTION COMMITTEE REVIEW

AMERICAN MEDICAL ASSOCIATION HOUSE OF DELEGATES

Resolution: 710
(N-21)

Introduced by: New York

Subject: Physician Burnout is an OSHA Issue

Referred to: Reference Committee G

Whereas, Repetitive Strain (Stress) Injury or RSI is defined as a category of injuries "to the musculoskeletal and nervous systems that may be caused by repetitive tasks, forceful exertions, vibrations, mechanical compression, or sustained or awkward positions; and

Whereas, RSI is a known work-related injury which falls under the purview of the Occupational Safety and Health Administration (OSHA); and

Whereas, Most RSI results from cumulative trauma rather than a single event; and

Whereas, Repeated exposure to work-related stressors can result in physician burnout; and

Whereas, Cerebral centers and activity are most certainly within the domain of the nervous system; and

Whereas, Physician burnout resulting from work-related stressors should be regarded as RSI and, as such, should fall under the aegis of OSHA; therefore be it

RESOLVED, That our American Medical Association seek legislation/regulation to add physician burnout as a Repetitive Strain (Stress) Injury and subject to Occupational Safety and Health Administration (OSHA) oversight. (Directive to Take Action)

Fiscal Note: Modest - between \$1,000 - \$5,000

Received: 10/13/21

AUTHOR'S STATEMENT OF PRIORITY

New York ranked this as vitally important – it has to do with physician health and well-being which has been sorely tested during the last year. Physicians are under enormous stress each and every day, and the COVID pandemic added immeasurably to that stress. The incidence of physician suicide increased during the last year – a clear indication of the added stress of COVID. Working without the necessary and proper equipment during the pandemic and watching colleagues die of COVID while doing their job has all added to the burden of being a physician. Physicians have few protections for their wellbeing and good health. Many feel that physicians should be “super-heroes” unaffected by the stress of providing health care in today’s very different environment. Adding physician burnout as an RSI subject to OSHA oversight would go a long way toward ensuring physicians work situation is monitored to ensure that they do not burnout.