

AMA Annual Meeting Wrap-up

The American Medical Association House of Delegates met Saturday, June 13, to Wednesday, June 17, 2009, in Chicago. The Medical Society of Delaware was a co-sponsor on three resolutions presented to the House for consideration. Below summarizes the deliberations by the AMA House of Delegates regarding the three resolutions that Delaware supported.

Resolution 203, the right to privately contract – Members of the HOD agreed that private contracting between patients and physicians should be protected, as reflected by current AMA policy, and that such contracting protects patients since it allows them increased access to care. It was voted to:

- Amend the original language of the resolution to reflect a patient focus and then adopt the resolution.
- Include in the AMA's top advocacy priorities the enactment of federal legislation that ensures and protects the fundamental right of patients to privately contract with physicians, without penalties, regardless of payer, within the framework of free market principles.
- Achieve the goal of accomplishing the legislation by 2010

Resolution 301, preserving physician licensure integrity – This resolution was introduced by various state and specialty medical groups in response to the National Board of Medical Examiners (NBME) agreement to develop a certification examination for qualified graduates of Doctor of Nursing Practice programs in the United States and by published reports from NBME that the new exam would be comparable in content, similar in format, measure similar competencies, and apply similar performance standards as Step 3 of the U.S. Medical License Examination. These groups asked that:

- The AMA and respective physician member organizations explore other physician licensure testing options to compete with the NBME.
- The AMA withdraw its representatives to the NBME, if the NBME is unwilling to preserve the integrity of the physician licensure process with regard to other professional licensing examinations.

However, because of the complexity of this topic, the progress that has been made so far in discussions with the NBME, and the general lack of consensus on the most productive course of action, **the resolution was referred to the AMA Board of Trustees.**

Resolution 423, a ban on tobacco sales in pharmacies – The AMA House of Delegates voted not to adopt this resolution as submitted but, instead, adopted Resolution 419. While Resolution 423 asked that the AMA lobby Congress to pass legislation to accomplish the goal of banning tobacco sales in pharmacies nationwide, Resolution 419 asks that the AMA:

- Specifically and publicly oppose the sale and marketing of tobacco products, including cigarettes, in a pharmacy.
- Communicate with appropriate federal agencies, including the Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco, and Firearms, public health groups, various pharmacy trade groups, and media outlets to seek their help in removing tobacco products from pharmacy shelves.
- Study the feasibility of the introduction and support of federal legislation to ban the sale of tobacco products in pharmacies across the country.
- Report back to the AMA HOD at the 2010 Annual Meeting.

In 2007, the Medical Society of Delaware House of Delegates adopted Amended Resolution 07-5, "Elimination of Tobacco Sales." Delaware's resolution supported the AMA's current policy at the time on tobacco sales, publicly commended pharmacies and owners who do not sell tobacco products, and encouraged patients to patronize pharmacies that do not sell tobacco products. The resolution also encouraged pharmacists and owners

to remove tobacco products from their stores. This resolution was then submitted to the AMA House of Delegates for consideration which was adopted as existing policy of the AMA.

AMA Supports Health System Reform Alternatives

On Monday of the meeting, President Barack Obama addressed the AMA House of Delegates, and requested the help of America's physicians as he pursues plans to reform the health care system. The next day, the HOD voted to support health system reform alternatives which are consistent with the AMA's principles of pluralism, freedom of choice, freedom of practice, and universal access for patients.