

AMERICAN MEDICAL ASSOCIATION HOUSE OF DELEGATES

Resolution: 605
(A-24)

Introduced by: Senior Physicians Section
Subject: Walking the Walk of Climate Change
Referred to: Reference Committee F

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2 Whereas, our American Medical Association has declared that climate change is an “urgent”
3 public health crisis per AMA Policy H-135.938, “Global Climate Change and Human Health”;
4 and

5
6 Whereas, our AMA “will protect patients by advocating for policies” that promote carbon
7 neutrality by the middle of this century in AMA Policy D-135.966, “Declaring Climate Change a
8 Public Health Crisis”; and

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10 Whereas, our AMA has pledged to “incorporate principles of environmental sustainability within
11 its business operations” in AMA Policy, H-135.923, “AMA Advocacy for Environmental
12 Sustainability and Climate”; and

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14 Whereas, there is considerable evidence that plant-based diets are more carbon friendly than
15 omnivorous or meat-heavy diets^{1,2}; and

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17 Whereas, emissions from agriculture, made up largely of ruminant meat and dairy farming, will
18 still push the world past safe climate change targets even if fossil fuel emissions were
19 eliminated immediately, thereby creating a dietary pattern that reduces the risk of diet-related
20 disease is the same diet that mitigates climate change; and

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22 Whereas, our AMA through its flagship journal, JAMA, has recently launched a series on
23 “Climate Change and Health” urging a commitment to actions that decrease greenhouse
24 emissions³; and

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26 Whereas, BOT Report 17-A-23 discussed our AMA’s plan to address and mitigate the health
27 effects of climate change as well as its participation in the National Academy Action
28 Collaborative on Decarbonizing the U.S. Health Sector, it was silent on addressing these same
29 issues within the AMA itself; therefore be it

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31 RESOLVED, that our American Medical Association Board of Trustees present to the House of
32 Delegates at Interim 2024 a detailed timeline as to when and how to achieve our organizational
33 carbon neutrality (Directive to Take Action); and be it further

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35 RESOLVED, that our AMA staff study AMA-related corporate travel with respect to minimizing
36 carbon emissions and/or mitigating or off-setting such emissions (Directive to Take Action); and
37 be it further

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39 RESOLVED, that our AMA adopt a policy for plant-based menus as the default option when
40 planning meeting venues with an opt-out alternative as appropriate. (Directive to Take Action)

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Fiscal Note: Moderate - between \$5,000 - \$10,000

Received: 5/2/2024

REFERENCES

1. Rosi, A., Mena, P., Pellegrini, N., Turrioni, S., Neviani, E., Ferrocino, I., ... & Scazzina, F. (2017). Environmental impact of omnivorous, ovo-lacto-vegetarian, and vegan diet. *Scientific reports*, 7(1), 6105.
2. Scarborough, P., Clark, M., Cobiac, L., Papier, K., Knuppel, A., Lynch, J., ... & Springmann, M. (2023). Vegans, vegetarians, fish-eaters and meat-eaters in the UK show discrepant environmental impacts. *Nature Food*, 4(7), 565-574.
3. Ebi, K. L., & Hess, J. J. Introduction to JAMA Climate Change and Health Series. *JAMA*. 2024;331(5):436–437. doi:10.1001/jama.2023.25878

RELEVANT AMA POLICY

H-135.923 AMA Advocacy for Environmental Sustainability and Climate

Our AMA (1) supports initiatives to promote environmental sustainability and other efforts to halt global climate change; (2) will incorporate principles of environmental sustainability within its business operations; and (3) supports physicians in adopting programs for environmental sustainability in their practices and help physicians to share these concepts with their patients and with their communities. [Citation: Res. 924, I-16; Reaffirmation:1-19]

H-135.938 Global Climate Change and Human Health

Our AMA: 1. Supports scientific consensus that the Earth is undergoing adverse global climate change and that anthropogenic contributions are significant. These climate changes have adversely affected the physical and mental health of people. We recognize that minoritized and marginalized populations, children, pregnant people, the elderly, rural communities, and those who are economically disadvantaged will suffer disproportionate harm from climate change.

2. Supports educating the medical community on the adverse public health effects of global climate change and incorporating the health implications of climate change into the spectrum of medical education, including topics such as population displacement, heat waves and drought, flooding, infectious and vector-borne diseases, and potable water supplies.

3. (a) Recognizes the importance of physician involvement in policymaking at the state, national, and global level and supports efforts to search for novel, comprehensive, and economically sensitive approaches to mitigating climate change to protect the health of the public; and (b) recognizes that whatever the etiology of global climate change, policymakers should work to reduce human contributions to such changes.

4. Encourages physicians to assist in educating patients and the public on the physical and mental health effects of climate change and on environmentally sustainable practices, and to serve as role models for promoting environmental sustainability.

5. Encourages physicians to work with local and state health departments to strengthen the public health infrastructure to ensure that the global health effects of climate change can be anticipated and responded to more efficiently, and that adaptation interventions are equitable and prioritize the needs of the populations most at risk.

6. Supports epidemiological, translational, clinical and basic science research necessary for evidence-based global climate change policy decisions related to health care and treatment.

7. Encourages physicians to assess for environmental determinants of health in patient history-taking and encourages the incorporation of assessment for environmental determinants of health in patient history-taking into physician training.

[CSAPH Rep. 3, I-08; Reaffirmation A-14; Reaffirmed CSAPH Rep.04, A-19; Reaffirmation: I-19; Modified: Res. 424, A-22; Modified: CSAPH Rep. 2, I-22]

D-135.966 Declaring Climate Change a Public Health Crisis

1. Our AMA declares climate change a public health crisis that threatens the health and well-being of all individuals. 2. Our AMA will protect patients by advocating for policies that: (a) limit global warming to no more than 1.5 degrees Celsius, (b) reduce US greenhouse gas emissions aimed at a 50 percent reduction in emissions by 2030 and carbon neutrality by 2050, and (c) support rapid implementation and incentivization of clean energy solutions and significant investments in climate resilience through a

climate justice lens. 3. Our AMA will consider signing on to the Department of Health and Human Services Health Care Pledge or making a similar commitment to lower its own greenhouse gas emissions. 4. Our AMA encourages the health sector to lead by example in committing to carbon neutrality by 2050. 5. Our AMA will develop a strategic plan for how we will enact our climate change policies including advocacy priorities and strategies to decarbonize physician practices and the health sector with report back to the House of Delegates at the 2023 Annual Meeting. [Res. 420, A-22; Appended: CSAPH Rep.02, I-22]

D-440.912 AMA Public Health Strategy

Our AMA will distribute evidence-based information on the relationship between climate change and human health through existing platforms and

communications channels, identify advocacy and leadership opportunities to elevate the voices of physicians on the public health crisis of climate change, and centralize our AMA's efforts towards environmental justice and an equitable transition to a net-zero carbon society by 2050.

2. Our AMA Board of Trustees will provide an update on loss of coverage and uninsurance rates following the return to regular Medicaid redeterminations and the end of the COVID-19 Public Health Emergency, the ensuing financial and administrative challenges experienced by physicians, physician practices, hospitals, and the healthcare system; and a report of actions taken by the AMA and recommendation for further action to address these issues at I-2023.

3. Our AMA Board of Trustees will provide a strategic plan or outline for the AMA's plan to address and combat the health effects of climate change at I-2023.

4. Our AMA Board of Trustees will provide an update on the efforts and initiatives of the AMA's gun violence task force at I-2023.

5. Our AMA will continue to support increased funding for public health infrastructure and workforce, which should include funding for preventative medicine related residency programs, to increase public health leadership in this country

[BOT Rep. 17, A-23; Modified: BOT Rep. 05, I-23]