

REPORT OF THE BOARD OF TRUSTEES

B of T Report 26-A-24

Subject: Equity and Justice Initiatives for International Medical Graduates

Presented by: Willie Underwood, III, MD, MSc, MPH, Chair

Referred to: Reference Committee F

1 BACKGROUND

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3 At the 2023 Annual Meeting of the American Medical Association (AMA) House of Delegates (HOD),
4 Resolution 605-A-23, “Equity and Justice Initiatives for International Medical Graduatesⁱ,” sponsored by
5 the International Medical Graduates Section, was referred to the Board of Trustees. Resolution 605-A-23
6 requested:

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8 1. That our American Medical Association, via the Center for Health Equity, create a yearly session
9 (during the Interim or Annual Meeting) as a part of the equity forum that will be dedicated to
10 international medical graduates (Directive to Take Action); and

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12 2. That our AMA, via the Center of Health Equity, create an amendment to the health equity plan
13 that will address the issues of equity and justice for international medical graduates. (Directive to
14 Take Action)

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16 DISCUSSION

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18 This report seeks to provide clarity to two questions: (1) Whether the AMA should, via the Center for
19 Health Equity, create a yearly session (during the Interim or Annual Meeting) as part of the equity forum
20 that will be dedicated to international medical graduates; and (2) Whether the AMA should, via the
21 Center for Health Equity, create an amendment to the health equity plan that will address the issues of
22 equity and justice for international medical graduates.

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24 *AMA Health Equity Open Forum*

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26 In 2022, at the Annual Meeting, the HOD adopted new policy titled “Continuing Equity Education G-
27 600.960”, which instructed AMA to establish an Open Forum on Health Equity, to be held at least
28 annually at a House of Delegates Meeting, for members to directly engage in educational discourse and
29 strengthen organizational capacity to advance and operationalize equity.

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31 Prior to its adoption, Resolution 611-A-22, as it was known at the time, was discussed openly during the
32 Reference Committee F Hearing. The resulting committee report provided:

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34 Reference Committee heard supportive testimony acknowledging the importance of
35 prioritizing equity through forums, education sessions, and other programming. Testimony
36 supported changing the frequency of educational opportunities to each House of Delegates
37 meeting, noting that it will increase education and awareness of the effects of bias,
38 prejudice, and racism in medicine. During testimony, it was mentioned that a call for

1 education sessions is made prior to each House of Delegates meeting. For the June 2022
2 meeting, the Center for Health Equity opted to host education sessions in lieu of an open
3 forum. Format and timing of educational sessions at the House of Delegates is at the
4 discretion of the Speakers in consultation with subject matter experts. In addition, the
5 proffered language allows for the potential of additional sessions offered online,
6 asynchronous to the House of Delegates meeting, or even at other AMA sponsored
7 meetings.ⁱⁱ
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9 The report provides many details, but it appears that delegates and attendees did not discuss specific
10 subject matter to be presented at each open forum, subsequently leaving the policy open to interpretation.
11 This is not an uncommon practice, if one were to skim through AMA policy, they would find that many
12 organizational policies have been adopted in the same manner relying on staff experts to take the lead on
13 executing requested actions.
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15 If we can infer anything from the HOD's decision to adopt the policy on Continuing Equity Education
16 with its current language, it would be that the HOD reserved the task of making equity-based decisions on
17 content development for the open forum for AMA staff. Since the policy was adopted at the 2022 Annual
18 Meeting, the Center for Health Equity has taken the lead on planning and has successfully hosted two
19 forums. During the planning and development stages, staff consistently prioritizes equity by ensuring
20 diverse perspectives are represented; considering the unique needs and experiences of all potential
21 attendees to create inclusive content that resonates with a wide audience; focusing on time-sensitive
22 topics to operationalize equity; and regularly assessing and adjusting their approach to address any
23 disparities and promote fairness in the planning and development process. To permanently designate a
24 particular topic or group over others would be counterproductive to the ideals of fairness and equity and
25 risks the possibility of harm, creating an atmosphere of resentment and discouragement among those who
26 may feel excluded or unfairly treated. Instead, AMA staff has employed an equitable content planning
27 and development process that balances the consideration of competing recommendations. Since policy
28 does require an equity forum at least once a year, each meeting presents an additional opportunity to
29 educate the House on a variety of equity-based topics, which can include, but is not limited to, issues
30 related to IMGs.
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32 *AMA Strategic Plan to Embed Racial Justice and Advance Health Equity* 33

34 In 2021, the Center for Health Equity published the AMA Strategic Plan to Embed Racial Justice and
35 Advance Health Equity. The 86-page document is a comprehensive initiative aimed at addressing
36 systemic inequities in healthcare. Rooted in the recognition of historical injustices and social drivers of
37 health, the plan outlines strategic actions to promote equity, diversity, and inclusion within the medical
38 community. It emphasizes the need for culturally competent care, increased representation of minoritized
39 and marginalized individuals in healthcare leadership, and the dismantling of barriers that perpetuate
40 racial and ethnic disparities. The Strategic Plan has sought to accomplish many goals, but the document
41 was also scheduled to sunset in 2023. To continue the work that the first Strategic Plan initiated, the
42 AMA has pushed forward with the development of the next iteration of the Plan. Following the goals
43 outlined in the first Strategic Plan, the second plan will go further by highlighting IMGs specifically, their
44 potential for advancing health equity amid significant challenges in training and working within the U.S.
45 It will also include details related to recent policy developments, accomplishments, and a call to action for
46 AMA. Prior to its release, authors of the Plan have worked closely with AMA IMG Section leadership to
47 thoroughly review and ensure that IMG perspectives are prominent in the document. At the 2024 Annual
48 Meeting, the Health Equity Open Forum will be an overview of the 2024-2025 Strategic Plan with
49 designated time to focus on IMG issues and perspectives. Our AMA will continue to support IMGs by
50 advocating for fair and transparent processes in licensing, protection of all rights and privileges, and
51 recognizing the valuable contributions IMGs make to the U.S. health care system.

1 RECOMMENDATION

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3 The Board of Trustees recommends that Resolution 605-A-23 not be adopted and that the remainder of
4 this report be filed.

Fiscal Note: None.

ⁱ Resolution 605-A-23, "Equity and Justice Initiatives for International Medical Graduates." <https://www.ama-assn.org/system/files/a23-605.pdf>

ⁱⁱ 2022 Annual Meeting Reference Committee F Report. <https://www.ama-assn.org/system/files/a22-reference-committee-reports.pdf>