MEDCHI, THE MARYLAND STATE MEDICAL SOCIETY
HOUSE OF DELEGATES

Resolution 45-18

INTRODUCED BY: MedChi Public Health Committee
MedChi Student Section

SUBJECT: Lead Levels in Rental Properties

Whereas, lead is a neurotoxin for which there is no safe level; and

Whereas, children are the most vulnerable to the preventable, but irreversible danger of lead poisoning; and

Whereas, children ingest and absorb more than adults, and the developing brain is more sensitive to the effects of lead exposure than the adult brain; and

Whereas, no known threshold for the effects of lead have been identified, including the effects on an individual’s IQ; and

Whereas a new study has found hyperactivity in children whose levels averaged 3.5 micrograms; and

Whereas, at very high levels, lead exposure can cause vomiting, lethargy, seizures, and death; and

Whereas, at lower levels, even asymptomatic exposures can be responsible for decreasing IQ, increased distractibility, impulsivity, short attention span, and inability to follow directions; and

Whereas, CDC and HUD have reduced action levels to 5 micrograms per deciliter; and

Whereas, even levels below this 5 micrograms per deciliter can reduce a child’s intellectual and academic ability, and lead to deleterious behavior, and

Whereas, each IQ point raises worker’s productivity and the economic lifetime losses in the United States attributable to lead exposure have been estimated to be between $165-233 billion in the cohort of children less than or equal to 6 years of age in 2006; and

Whereas, primary prevention, that is, removing the sources of lead before exposure occurs, is the

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1 http://pediatrics.aappublications.org/content/138/1/e20161493
4 https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pmc/articles/PMC2717145/
most reliable and cost-effective way to protect our children, per the American Academy of Pediatrics⁵; and

Whereas a Baltimore Sun investigative report⁶ on rental court recently documented that families were allowed to rent even where inspectors found that there were lead hazards noted in the rental unit; and

Whereas, pediatricians cannot be expected to manage such care without the help of the health departments; and therefore be it

Resolved, that MedChi support legislation that the Maryland Department of Health intervene in cases where children are exposed to lead levels of at least 5 micrograms per deciliter.

As amended and adopted by the House of Delegates at its meeting on September 22, 2018.

⁵ http://pediatrics.aappublications.org/content/138/1/e20161493