

MEDCHI, THE MARYLAND STATE MEDICAL SOCIETY
HOUSE OF DELEGATES

Resolution 4-15

INTRODUCED BY: Anne Arundel and Howard County Medical Society

SUBJECT: Unreasonable Practices of Online Rating Sites

1 Whereas, Physician Online Rating sites invite patients to rate physicians on the internet; and

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3 Whereas, Online Rating sites rate physicians according to how clean their office is, how they explain
4 patients' illnesses, how professional their medical staff is and other things; and

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6 Whereas, these Online Rating sites are not to be confused with professional rating organizations or actual
7 measures of a physician's competence based on clinical outcomes; and

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9 Whereas, these sites are often cumbersome and complicated to use; and

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11 Whereas, many of the patients who are motivated to use these sites are those who want to post negative
12 comments; and

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14 Whereas, one study showed that patients with hidden agendas such as drug seekers or psychiatrically ill
15 patients are more likely to post negative comments on these sites; and

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17 Whereas, one study identified a sub group of patients who regularly use these sites and discovered that they
18 have a higher mortality rate than patients who do not use these sites; and

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20 Whereas, various sources have suggested competitors from other offices or other non-patients may use
21 these sites to post negative comments; and

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23 Whereas, even some physicians who have had their medical licenses revoked or suspended may have
24 favorable ratings on these sites; and

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26 Whereas; these Online Ratings sites have been known to tell offices that they will accept payment from
27 physicians to suppress negative reviews; therefore be it

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29 Resolved, that MedChi educate physicians about online ratings companies and how to protect their patients
30 from undue influence by these companies; and be it further

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32 Resolved, that MedChi keep physicians informed about the medicolegal risk of posting replies on online
33 rating sites; and be it further

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35 Resolved, that MedChi explore the feasibility of streamlining the process for physicians' offices so that a
36 physician's office can post reviews on behalf of patients who wish to post comments (with their written
37 consent) on online rating sites.

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40 As amended and approved by the House of Delegates at its meeting on April 25, 2015.