

MEDCHI, THE MARYLAND STATE MEDICAL SOCIETY  
HOUSE OF DELEGATES

Resolution 26-20

INTRODUCED BY: Ethics and Judicial Affairs Committee

SUBJECT: Support for AMA Ethical Policy on Physician-Assisted Suicide

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1 Whereas, since its adoption at the founding meeting of the American Medical Association in  
2 1847, our AMA Code of Medical Ethics has articulated the values to which physicians commit  
3 themselves as members of the medical profession; and  
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5 Whereas, our AMA Code of Ethics is rooted in an understanding of the goals of medicine as a  
6 profession that dates back to the 5th century B.C. and the Greek physician Hippocrates: to  
7 relieve suffering and promote well-being in a relationship of fidelity with the patient;and  
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9 Whereas, the American Medical Association, the American College of Physicians, the National  
10 Hospice and Palliative Care Organization, and the World Medical Association all oppose the  
11 practice of physician-assisted suicide; and  
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13 Whereas, our AMA Code of Ethics since 1993 has stated that “Physician-assisted suicide is  
14 fundamentally incompatible with the physician’s role as healer, would be difficult or impossible  
15 to control, and would pose serious societal risks;” and  
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17 Whereas, our AMA’s Council of Ethical and Judicial Affairs (CEJA) in 2016 initiated a  
18 thorough and comprehensive review of PAS, soliciting information and opinions from a wide  
19 variety of stakeholders on the issue, and concluded in its report of 2018 that no substantive  
20 change in its ethical policy was warranted; and  
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22 Whereas, the 2018 CEJA report on PAS was extensively reviewed and vigorously debated at 3  
23 separate AMA House of Delegates meetings in 2018 and 2019 before being adopted by a strong  
24 margin of >70% of Delegates; therefore be it  
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26 Resolved, that MedChi supports our AMA’s current position statement on physician-assisted  
27 suicide codified in Opinion E-5.7 and Opinion 1.1.7 of our AMA Code of Ethics.  
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30 Fiscal Note: No significant fiscal impact.