

1 OHIO STATE MEDICAL ASSOCIATION HOUSE OF DELEGATES

2
3 Resolution No. 13 – 2023

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5 **Introduced by:** OSMA Medical Student Section

6
7 **Subject:** Supporting Environmental Sustainability in Hospitals and Physician
8 Offices

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10 **Referred to:** Resolutions Committee No. 1
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14 **WHEREAS**, There is agreement among climate experts, both nationally and
15 internationally, that global warming and climate change are occurring and that human
16 activity is very likely to be the dominant driver of both phenomena^{1,2,3}; and

17
18 **WHEREAS**, an international collaborative of climate and health experts
19 recognizes climate change as the single greatest threat to human health in this century,
20 and more than 200 medical journals have published editorials which support this claim
21 and encourage action to limit global temperature rise, which includes a call to work
22 toward environmentally sustainable health systems^{4,5}; and

23
24 **WHEREAS**, the health sector is responsible for 8.5% of the United States'
25 greenhouse gas emissions as of 2018^{6,7}; and

26
27 **WHEREAS**, negative health effects attributable to the United States' healthcare
28 pollution is on the same order of magnitude as preventable medical errors, at an
29 upwards of 400,000 disability adjusted life years annually⁸; and

30
31 **WHEREAS**, healthcare facilities are a major direct source of pollution, with
32 hospital care and physician and clinical services responsible for 36% and 12% of
33 emission in 2018, respectively^{9,10}; and

34
35 **WHEREAS**, Ohio has among the highest health care greenhouse gas emissions
36 per capita nationally, between 1,800kg and 2,000kg CO₂, which is the highest of any
37 Midwestern state¹⁰; and

38
39 **WHEREAS**, sustainability efforts enable healthcare facilities to ameliorate their
40 carbon footprint, minimize waste, reduced cost, and improve public image¹¹; and

41
42 **WHEREAS**, healthcare can be made sustainable, as Kaiser Permanente, the
43 nation's largest nonprofit health system, achieved carbon neutrality in 2020 while saving
44 \$20 million annually through greater resource efficiency¹²; and
45

46 **WHEREAS**, resources such as Healthcare Without Harm, Global Green and
47 Healthy Hospitals, My Green Doctor, Practice Green Health, and Sustainability Road
48 Map, among others, have been developed by members of the medical community to
49 help physician offices and hospitals incorporate environmentally sustainable
50 practices^{13,14,15,16,17,18}; and

51
52 **WHEREAS**, the state medical societies of Colorado, Delaware, New Jersey, and
53 Florida, as well as, the American Academy of Family Physicians provide practice-
54 management resources to their members¹⁵; and

55
56 **WHEREAS**, physicians have a commitment to “First, do no harm”, and therefore
57 should work to minimize the indirect harm caused through the production of greenhouse
58 gasses and medical waste; and

59
60 **WHEREAS**, the AMA recognizes that climate change impacts human health (H-
61 135.938 and D-135.966), supports educating the medical community about these
62 effects (H-135.919), supports physician involvement in policy-making around this issue
63 (H-135.973), encourages patient education on the topic, and supports physician
64 involvement in public health and research efforts pertaining to climate change; and

65
66 **WHEREAS**, the AMA supports efforts by healthcare facilities to become more
67 environmentally sustainable (H-135.939) and seeks to become more sustainable in its
68 own operations (H-135.923); and

69
70 **WHEREAS**, our OSMA has expressed support for the expansion of renewable
71 energy at the state level (P09-2019), as well as support for development of policy to
72 combat climate change and educate our medical community on the adverse effects of
73 climate change (P27-2022) ; and NOW THEREFORE

74
75 **BE IT RESOLVED**, that our OSMA (1) supports initiatives to promote
76 environmental sustainability by healthcare facilities across Ohio, and (2) supports
77 physicians in adopting programs for environmental sustainability in their practices.

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79 **Fiscal Note:** \$ (Sponsor)
80 \$ 5,000 (Staff)

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83 **References:**

84
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