
**AMERICAN MEDICAL STUDENT ASSOCIATION
HOUSE OF DELEGATES 2016
RESOLUTION: C12**

INTRODUCED BY:	Jim Curry, Member Health Care for All Campaign, Past Premed Trustee (2010-11); Elizabeth Wiley, MD, JD, MPH, Past National President (2012-2013)
SCHOOL:	University of Illinois at Chicago
SUBJECT:	Amendment to Principles Regarding the Environment
TYPE:	Resolution of Principles

1 WHEREAS the Lancet Commission on Health and Climate Change declared that “tackling climate change could be the
2 greatest global health opportunity of the 21st century;” [1] and
3

4 WHEREAS the Paris Agreement signed at the UN Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC) Conference of
5 Parties 21 in December 2015 signals the urgency of global action on climate change and provides a framework for an
6 ambitious to hold “the increase average temperature to well below 2 degrees Celsius” and pursue efforts to “limit the
7 temperature increase to 1.5 degrees Celsius above pre-industrial levels;” [2] and
8

9 WHEREAS AMSA supports “the development of energy policy that greatly reduces the use of fossil fuels by supporting
10 energy efficiency and conservation and responsible development of clean renewable energy” [3] and has supported and
11 urged both public and private sectors in the U.S. to advance policies that reduce reliance on fossil fuels and promote
12 alternative clean and safe energy technologies; and
13

14 WHEREAS reliance on fossil fuels is a major driver of climate change as a result of greenhouse gas emissions and a
15 major cause of air pollution; and
16

17 WHEREAS emissions of CO2 from fossil fuel combustion and industrial processes contributed about 78% of the total
18 greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions increase from 1970 to 2010, with a similar percentage contribution for the increase
19 during the period 2000 to 2010; [4] and
20

21 WHEREAS the World Health Organization estimates that 7 million premature deaths globally are linked to air pollution
22 each year; [5] and
23

24 WHEREAS an estimated 200,000 premature deaths occur in the U.S. due to combustion emissions; [6] and
25

26 WHEREAS morbidity and mortality associated with air pollution disproportionately affects vulnerable populations, low
27 and middle income countries and exacerbates health disparities; and
28

29 WHEREAS acute and chronic exposure to fine particulate matter and other components of air pollution contribute to
30 chronic illnesses and their acute exacerbations, such as ischemic heart disease, stroke, chronic obstructive lung disease,
31 lung cancer and pediatric respiratory illnesses; and
32

33 WHEREAS the White House reported on August 3, 2015, that in the past three decades, extreme weather events - from
34 more severe droughts and wildfires in the West to record heat waves – and sea level rise are hitting communities across
35 the country; and
36

37 WHEREAS, recognizing the climate/health nexus, there is a growing divestment movement in the health sector and
38 several organizations have adopted fossil fuel divestment policies in the last few years including Health Care Without

Harm, Practice Greenhealth [7], the British Medical Association (BMA) [8], the Canadian Medical Association (CMA) [9] and the International Federation of Medical Students' Associations (IFMSA) [10];

THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED that the Principles Regarding the Environment (p. 119-121) be AMENDED BY ADDITION to state:

14. Regarding Fossil Fuel Investments:

- a. **URGES** that AMSA adopt a preventive approach to health by beginning a process of divestment from energy companies whose primary business relies upon fossil fuels and reinvestment in companies that provide renewable energy sources ;
- b. **SUPPORTS** preferential investments producing clean energy, climate conscious and health promoting businesses whenever deemed possible;
- c. **SUPPORTS** education of health professionals across the career spectrum concerning climate change, fossil fuels and the health co-benefits of action to address climate change;
- d. **URGES** other health sector organizations and health care professionals to adopt similar fossil fuel divestment policies.

FISCAL NOTE: None

REPORT OF REFERENCE COMMITTEE C

DISCUSSION

BOT: Voted to adopt as written, 10-0-0

BRD: Voted to ***

PRD: Voted to ***

IRD: Voted to adopt as written, unanimous

ACTE: Voted to adopt as amended

Strike line 48 beginning with urges AMSA adopt and ending "divestment" and add "Strongly supports divestment"

Premedical Caucus: Voted to ***

SUMMARY OF DISCUSSION

PROS: *** (i.e. The proposition testimony argued... No proposition testimony provided; etc)

CONS: *** (i.e. The opposition testimony argued... No opposition testimony provided; etc)

- [1] Watts N, Adger WN, Agnolucci P, Blackstock J, Byass P, Cai W, et al. Health and climate change: policy responses to protect public health. Lancet [Internet]. 2015 Jun 24; Available from: [http://dx.doi.org/10.1016/S0140-6736\(15\)60854-6](http://dx.doi.org/10.1016/S0140-6736(15)60854-6)
- [2] United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change. Adoption of the Paris Agreement. FCCC/CP/2015/L.9/Rev.1 [Internet]. [cited 2015 Dec]. Available from: http://unfccc.int/documentation/documents/advanced_search/items/6911.php?preref=600008831
- [3] AMSA Principles on the Environment, Sec. 12 (2012)
- [4] Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change – Working Group 2. Climate Change 2014: Impacts, Adaptation and Vulnerability, 2014. Available at <http://www.ipcc.ch/report/ar5/wg2/>
- [5] World Health Organization, 7 million premature deaths annually linked to air pollution, 2014. Available at <http://www.who.int/mediacentre/news/releases/2014/air-pollution/en/>
- [6] Caiazzo F et al. Air pollution and early deaths in the United States. Part I: Quantifying the impact of major sectors in 2005. Atmospheric Environment, 2013;79:198-208. Available at <http://www.sciencedirect.com/science/article/pii/S1352231013004548>
- [7] Health Care Without Harm and Practice Greenhealth Divest from Fossil Fuel Holdings. May 12, 2015. Accessed online: <https://noharm-uscanada.org/articles/press-release/us-canada/health-care-without-harm-and-practice-greenhealth-divest-fossil>
- [8] BMA annual meeting: Representatives vote to spread the word about the benefits of shunning fossil fuels. BMJ 2014. Accessed online at: <http://www.bmj.com/content/348/bmj.g4307>
- [9] Doctors call for divestment from fossil fuels. CMAJ 2015. Accessed online at: <http://www.cmaj.ca/content/187/13/E403.full>
- [10] Accessed online at: <http://ifmsa.org/2015/02/16/adp-2-8-climate-change-unhealthy-investments-and-politics/>

REFERENCE COMMITTEE COMMENTS

This resolution has wide support but is enhance by the amendments proposed by ACTE as represented below.

REFERENCE COMMITTEE RECOMMENDATION

Adopt as amended

WHEREAS the Lancet Commission on Health and Climate Change declared that “tackling climate change could be the greatest global health opportunity of the 21st century;” [1] and

WHEREAS the Paris Agreement signed at the UN Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC) Conference of Parties 21 in December 2015 signals the urgency of global action on climate change and provides a framework for an ambitious to hold “the increase average temperature to well below 2 degrees Celsius” and pursue efforts to “limit the temperature increase to 1.5 degrees Celsius above pre-industrial levels;” [2] and

WHEREAS AMSA supports “the development of energy policy that greatly reduces the use of fossil fuels by supporting energy efficiency and conservation and responsible development of clean renewable energy” [3] and has supported and urged both public and private sectors in the U.S. to advance policies that reduce reliance on fossil fuels and promote alternative clean and safe energy technologies; and

WHEREAS reliance on fossil fuels is a major driver of climate change as a result of greenhouse gas emissions and a major cause of air pollution; and

WHEREAS emissions of CO2 from fossil fuel combustion and industrial processes contributed about 78% of the total greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions increase from 1970 to 2010, with a similar percentage contribution for the increase during the period 2000 to 2010; [4] and

WHEREAS the World Health Organization estimates that 7 million premature deaths globally are linked to air pollution each year; [5] and

WHEREAS an estimated 200,000 premature deaths occur in the U.S. due to combustion emissions; [6] and

WHEREAS morbidity and mortality associated with air pollution disproportionately affects vulnerable populations, low and middle income countries and exacerbates health disparities; and

WHEREAS acute and chronic exposure to fine particulate matter and other components of air pollution contribute to chronic illnesses and their acute exacerbations, such as ischemic heart disease, stroke, chronic obstructive lung disease, lung cancer and pediatric respiratory illnesses; and

WHEREAS the White House reported on August 3, 2015, that in the past three decades, extreme weather events - from more severe droughts and wildfires in the West to record heat waves – and sea level rise are hitting communities across the country; and

WHEREAS, recognizing the climate/health nexus, there is a growing divestment movement in the health sector and several organizations have adopted fossil fuel divestment policies in the last few years including Health Care Without Harm, Practice Greenhealth [7], the British Medical Association (BMA) [8], the Canadian Medical Association (CMA) [9] and the International Federation of Medical Students’ Associations (IFMSA) [10];

THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED that the Principles Regarding the Environment (p. 119-121) be AMENDED BY ADDITION to state:

14. Regarding Fossil Fuel Investments:

- 108 a. ~~URGES that AMSA adopt a preventive approach to health by beginning a process of~~
109 ~~SUPPORTS~~ divestment from energy companies whose primary business relies upon fossil fuels and
110 reinvestment in companies that provide renewable energy sources ;
111 b. ~~SUPPORTS~~ preferential investments producing clean energy, climate conscious and health promoting
112 businesses whenever deemed possible;
113 c. ~~SUPPORTS~~ education of health professionals across the career spectrum concerning climate change,
114 fossil fuels and the health co-benefits of action to address climate change;
115 d. ~~URGES~~ other health sector organizations and health care professionals to adopt similar fossil fuel
116 divestment policies.
117

118
119 FISCAL NOTE: None
120
121

- [1] Watts N, Adger WN, Agnolucci P, Blackstock J, Byass P, Cai W, et al. Health and climate change: policy responses to protect public health. Lancet [Internet]. 2015 Jun 24; Available from: [http://dx.doi.org/10.1016/S0140-6736\(15\)60854-6](http://dx.doi.org/10.1016/S0140-6736(15)60854-6)
- [2] United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change. Adoption of the Paris Agreement. FCCC/CP/2015/L.9/Rev.1 [Internet]. [cited 2015 Dec]. Available from: http://unfccc.int/documentation/documents/advanced_search/items/6911.php?preref=600008831
- [3] AMSA Principles on the Environment, Sec. 12 (2012)
- [4] Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change – Working Group 2. Climate Change 2014: Impacts, Adaptation and Vulnerability, 2014. Available at <http://www.ipcc.ch/report/ar5/wg2/>
- [5] World Health Organization, 7 million premature deaths annually linked to air pollution, 2014. Available at <http://www.who.int/mediacentre/news/releases/2014/air-pollution/en/>
- [6] Caiazzo F et al. Air pollution and early deaths in the United States. Part I: Quantifying the impact of major sectors in 2005. Atmospheric Environment, 2013;79:198-208. Available at <http://www.sciencedirect.com/science/article/pii/S1352231013004548>
- [7] Health Care Without Harm and Practice Greenhealth Divest from Fossil Fuel Holdings. May 12, 2015. Accessed online: <https://noharm-uscanada.org/articles/press-release/us-canada/health-care-without-harm-and-practice-greenhealth-divest-fossil>
- [8] BMA annual meeting: Representatives vote to spread the word about the benefits of shunning fossil fuels. BMJ 2014. Accessed online at: <http://www.bmj.com/content/348/bmj.g4307>
- [9] Doctors call for divestment from fossil fuels. CMAJ 2015. Accessed online at: <http://www.cmaj.ca/content/187/13/E403.full>
- [10] Accessed online at: <http://ifmsa.org/2015/02/16/adp-2-8-climate-change-unhealthy-investments-and-politics/>