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

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| 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
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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
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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
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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
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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
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21 WHEREAS the World Health Organization estimates that 7 million premature deaths globally are linked to air pollution
22 each year; [5] and
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24 WHEREAS an estimated 200,000 premature deaths occur in the U.S. due to combustion emissions; [6] and
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26 WHEREAS morbidity and mortality associated with air pollution disproportionately affects vulnerable populations, low
27 and middle income countries and exacerbates health disparities; and
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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
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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
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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

39 Harm, Practice Greenhealth [7], the British Medical Association (BMA) [8], the Canadian Medical Association (CMA)
40 [9] and the International Federation of Medical Students' Associations (IFMSA) [10];
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43 **THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED** that the Principles Regarding the Environment (p. 119-121) be AMENDED BY
44 ADDITION to state:
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46 **14. Regarding Fossil Fuel Investments:**
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- 48 a. **URGES** that AMSA adopt a preventive approach to health by beginning a process of divestment from
49 energy companies whose primary business relies upon fossil fuels and reinvestment in companies that
50 provide renewable energy sources ;
- 51 b. **SUPPORTS** preferential investments producing clean energy, climate conscious and health promoting
52 businesses whenever deemed possible;
- 53 c. **SUPPORTS** education of health professionals across the career spectrum concerning climate change,
54 fossil fuels and the health co-benefits of action to address climate change;
- 55 d. **URGES** other health sector organizations and health care professionals to adopt similar fossil fuel
56 divestment policies.
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59 FISCAL NOTE: None

- [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/>