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Title: Female Genital Mutilation (FGM) – Redefining AMA Policy H-525-980

Introduced by: Dorothy Kahkonen, MD, for the Wayne County Delegation

Original Author: Mohammed Arsiwala, MD

Referred to: Reference Committee C

House Action: Adopted as Amended.

Whereas, Female Genital Mutilation (FGM) is a medically unnecessary procedure to modify female genitalia for religious or cultural reasons, and

Whereas, FGM is also an international health concern identified by world health organizations, and

Whereas, FGM is performed in the United States as an underground procedure, at times by licensed medical physicians, and

Whereas, JAMA.1995; 274:1714-1716 Abstract states “female genital mutilation is the medically unnecessary modification of female genitalia,” and FGM typically occurs at about seven years of age, but mutilated women suffer severe medical complications throughout their adult lives; and FGM most frequently occurs in Africa, the Middle East, and Muslim parts of Indonesia and Malaysia, and it is generally part of a ceremonial induction into adult society. Recent political and economic problems in these regions, however, have increased the numbers of students and refugees to the United States. Consequently, US physicians are treating an increasing number of mutilated patients. The Council on Scientific Affairs recommends that US physicians join the World Health Organization, the World Medical Association, and other major health care organizations in opposing all forms of medically unnecessary surgical modification of the female genitalia, and

Whereas, in 1997, then Representative Patricia Schroeder (D-Colorado) shepherded a bill making female circumcision a federal crime. The federal law makes the practice of FGM on anyone younger than 18 years of age illegal within the United States punishable by felony with fines or up to 5 years prison term, and

Whereas, Michigan Law 750.86 Assault with Intent to Maim section 86 reads as follows: Assault with intent to maim- Any person who shall assault another with intent to maim or disfigure his person by cutting out or maiming the tongue, putting out or destroying an eye, cutting or tearing off an ear, cutting, slitting or mutilating the nose or lips or cutting off or disabling a limb, organ or member, shall be guilty of a felony punishable by imprisonment in the

50 state prison of not more than 10 years or by fine of not more than 5,000 dollars,
51 and

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53 Whereas, international organizations and women's right advocates
54 generally believe that lasting change toward FGM can only take place with the
55 support of the governments and local communities with affected countries.
56 Pressure from outside those countries has little chance for success if there is
57 no educational and legal support from within their borders; therefore be it

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59 **RESOLVED:** that MSMS work with Attorney General's office and the
60 Michigan legislature to strengthen and develop specific child abuse and felony
61 statutes specific to FGM and female circumcision in the state of Michigan as it
62 is in many other states; and be it further

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64 **RESOLVED:** That the Michigan Delegation to the AMA ask the AMA to
65 amend the language of AMA Policy H-525.980 to include added language in item
66 (1) to read: is in opposition to the practice of female genital mutilation (FGM) by
67 any physicians or licensed practitioner in the United States; (2) considers FGM
68 a form of child abuse; (3) support legislation to eliminate the performance of
69 female genital mutilation in the United States and to protect young girls and
70 women at risk of undergoing the procedure; and (4) supports that physicians
71 who are requested to perform female genital mutilation on a patient provide
72 culturally sensitive counseling to educate the patient and her family members
73 about the negative health consequences of the procedure, and discourage them
74 from having the procedure performed. Where possible, physicians should refer
75 the patient to social support groups that can help them cope with changing
76 societal mores; (5) report any evidence of FGM noted during office visits or
77 physical exams to child protective services and law enforcement as child
78 abuse; and (6) will work to ensure that medical students, residents, and
79 practicing physicians are made aware of the continued practice and existence
80 of FGM in the United States, its physical effects on patients, and the
81 requirements for reporting FGM.

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84 **WAYS AND MEANS COMMITTEE FISCAL NOTE: NONE**