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**RESOLUTION 50-15**

3 Title: Promoting Good Fomite Stewardship in Clinical Settings  
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5 Introduced by: Sarah Gorgis, Gunjan Malhotra, Tamara Roumayah, Jawan  
6 Gorgis, Jeremy Llaniguez and Andrew Zureick for the Medical  
7 Student Section  
8  
9 Original Author: Sarah Gorgis  
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11 Referred to: Reference Committee A  
12  
13 House Action: **APPROVED AS AMENDED**  
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15  
16 Whereas, hospital acquired infections are the leading cause of hospital related  
17 complications, affecting one out of every 20 patients (hundreds of thousands per year)  
18 and costing the healthcare system approximately \$10 billion dollars per year<sup>i</sup>, and  
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20 Whereas, the introduction of mandatory hand washing resulted in significant  
21 reductions in nosocomial infections<sup>ii,iii</sup>, and  
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23 Whereas, in the past few years the use of screen-based devices became  
24 exponentially prevalent in hospitals, as evidenced by a survey sent to graduate  
25 medical education training programs that showed 40 percent used portable electronic  
26 devices (PEDs)<sup>iv</sup>, and  
27

28 Whereas, fomites (e.g., computer keyboards, pens, tablets, clothing,  
29 stethoscopes, ties, phones, etc.) are well-described sources for transmission of  
30 pathogenic bacteria in hospital settings,<sup>v,vi,vii</sup> and  
31

32 Whereas, a study performed at the Detroit Medical Center revealed that PEDs  
33 can be colonized with a variety of pathogenic organisms, and can act as a possible  
34 reservoir for the transmission of pathogens<sup>viii</sup>, and  
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36 Whereas, there is no universally accepted protocol in the use or cleanliness of  
37 screen-based devices, and their use may introduce a rise in nosocomial infections,  
38 and  
39

40 Whereas, although hand washing is mandatory and more commonly practiced,  
41 people commonly contaminate newly cleaned hands after entering a room by using  
42 infected fomites, and  
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44 Whereas, there is currently no official acknowledgement of the potential danger  
45 and cost that the increased use of PEDs and other fomites create; therefore be it  
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47 **RESOLVED:** That the American Medical Association educate physicians  
48 regarding the best practices for cleaning portable electronic devices and other  
49 fomites; and be it further

50           RESOLVED: That MSMS advocate that health care providers understand  
51 proper hand-washing techniques after touching any fomites, including, but not limited  
52 to portable electronic devices, stethoscopes, other hand-held instruments, pens,  
53 phones, etc. prior to touching the patient in order to minimize the potential risk of  
54 nosocomial infection.

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57           WAYS AND MEANS COMMITTEE FISCAL NOTE: None

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<sup>i</sup> B. Goodman, “Hospital-Acquired Infections Cost \$10 Billion a Year: Study”; HealthDay 2015

<sup>ii</sup> Evidence of hand hygiene to reduce transmission and infections by multidrug resistant organisms in health-care settings

<sup>iii</sup> D. Pittet, “Hand hygiene: improved standards and practice for hospital care”

<sup>iv</sup> J. Sclafani, T.F. Tirrell, O.I. Franko. “Mobile tablet use among academic physicians and trainees”. *J Med Syst*, 37 (2013), p. 9903

<sup>v</sup> Y. Longtin, A. Schneider, C. Tschopp, G. Renzi, A. Gayet-Ageron, J. Schrenzel, et al. “Contamination of stethoscopes and physicians' hands after a physical examination”. *Mayo Clin Proc*, 89 (2014), pp. 291–299

<sup>vi</sup> S. Bures, J.T. Fishbain, C.F. Uyehara, J.M. Parker, B.W. Berg. “Computer keyboards and faucet handles as reservoirs of nosocomial pathogens in the intensive care unit”. *Am J Infect Control*, 28 (2000), pp. 465–471

<sup>vii</sup> J. Ramesh, A.O. Carter, M.H. Campbell, N. Gibbons, C. Powlett, H. Moseley Sr., et al. “Use of mobile phones by medical staff at Queen Elizabeth Hospital, Barbados: evidence for both benefit and harm”. *J Hosp Infect*, 70 (2008), pp. 160–165

<sup>viii</sup> A. Khan, A. Rao, C. Reyes-Sacin, K. Hayakawa, S. Szpunar, K. Riederer, K. Kaye, J. Fishbain, D. Levine. “Use of portable electronic devices in a hospital setting and their potential for bacterial colonization” *American Journal of Infection Control* Volume 43, Issue 3, 1 March 2015, Pages 286–288