

LATE RESOLUTION 77-15

1
2
3 Title: Informed Consent Prior to Administration of Medication Which
4 May Hasten Death
5
6 Introduced by: Cheryl Farmer, MD
7
8 Original Author: Michael R. Simon, MD
9
10 Referred to: Committee on Rules and Order of Business/Reference
11 Committee A
12
13 House Action: **DISAPPROVED**
14

15
16 Whereas, physicians are committed to the preservation of the health and lives
17 of their patients, and

18
19 Whereas, physicians are committed to preventing and ameliorating the pain
20 and suffering of their patients, and

21
22 Whereas, certain medications prescribed by a physician, whose primary intent
23 is to relieve suffering and control pain, may have an additional unintended effect of
24 hastening the death of the patient, and

25
26 Whereas, patient autonomy, beneficence, non-maleficence and respect for
27 persons are primary principles and virtues in the ethical practice of medicine, and

28
29 Whereas, informed consent is the primary vehicle whereby patient autonomy,
30 beneficence, non-maleficence and respect for persons are promoted in the context of
31 the doctor - patient relationship, and

32
33 Whereas, the Report of the Council on Ethical and Judicial Affairs Report 5-A-
34 08 "Sedation to Unconsciousness in End-of-Life Care" states that the "preferences of
35 the patient in these matters should prevail", and

36
37 Whereas, the MSMS has no written policy on the administration of medication
38 which may hasten death; therefore be it

39
40 **RESOLVED:** That MSMS supports a physician obtaining the consent of a
41 patient (and/or the patient's surrogate), when a physician appropriately administers a
42 medicine for the purpose and intent of controlling pain and/or relieving physical
43 suffering, but where such a medication may potentially shorten the life of the patient,
44 prior to the administration of such medication so that the patient and/or the patient's
45 surrogate clearly understands the potential of that medication for shortening life.
46

47
48 WAYS AND MEANS COMMITTEE FISCAL NOTE: None