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Title: Data Tampering in Public Health Reporting
Introduced by: Paige Goote for the Medical Student Section
Original Author: Nicholas Harrison
Referred to: Reference Committee D
House Action: **AMEND**

Whereas, there is currently a state of emergency in the city of Flint based on dangerously high levels of lead in its water resulting in the doubling of blood lead levels in children, and

Whereas, it has been alleged that data on the amount of lead in Flint’s water had previously been manipulated by public employees to hide these elevated lead levels, and

Whereas, manipulation of public health data to avoid reporting unfavorable circumstances represents an unethical act in any such case, and

Whereas, manipulation and/or intentionally inaccurate reporting of public health data presents a tremendous and direct threat to community health and patient safety, and

Whereas, current American Medical Association (AMA) policy H-170.986 states that “Public and private agencies should increase their efforts to identify and curtail false and misleading information on health and health care,” and “Information on health and health care should be presented in an accurate and objective manner,” and

Whereas, no current AMA or MSMS policy directly addresses the possibility of criminalizing acts of intentional distortion, manipulation, or omission of public health data carried out by public employees in the State of Michigan or nationally, and

Whereas, the intentional distortion of data by state employees is not at this time clearly punishable as a criminal offense in Michigan, and

Whereas, Michigan legislators are currently exploring legislation to criminalize the distortion, manipulation, or omission of state public health data by public employees, with a felony punishment for the culpable employee and/or any supervisor proven to have coerced the employee into such an act; therefore be it

RESOLVED: That MSMS strongly opposes any intentional tampering, distortion, or manipulation of data used in preparation for an official report by public employees as they represent dangers to public health and unethical acts; and be it further

47 RESOLVED: That MSMS supports and will lobby for the criminalization of acts of
48 intentional distortion, manipulation, or omission of data used in preparation for an official
49 report by public employees, in an effort to dissuade such unethical actions and the danger they
50 pose to public health.

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53 WAYS AND MEANS COMMITTEE FISCAL NOTE: NONE

Reference(s):

1. http://www.mlive.com/news/flint/index.ssf/2016/01/governor_declares_state_of_eme.html
2. <http://michiganradio.org/post/state-employees-who-intentionally-distort-data-could-face-jail-time-under-proposed-law>
3. <http://detroit.cbslocal.com/2015/10/08/lax-water-system-oversight-manipulated-data-lead-to-public-health-crisis-in-flint-researcher-says/>
4. http://www.mlive.com/news/flint/index.ssf/2016/02/snyder_ordered_deq_to_withhold.html#incart_special-report