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Title: Calling Physicians by their First Name

Introduced by: Domenic Federico, MD, for the Kent County Delegation

Original Author: Patrick J. Droste, MD

Referred to: Reference Committee C

House Action: **AMEND**

Whereas, recent policies at West Michigan hospitals have recommended calling all physicians by their first name in lieu of the traditional title of “Doctor,” and

Whereas, the alleged purposes of this movement are to decrease the “power gradient” between physicians and non-physician staff and open the lines of communication to enhance patient safety in the hospital and clinic setting, and

Whereas, many non-physician hospital and clinic staff are uncomfortable with this policy and refrain from endorsing it fully or partially, and

Whereas, calling physicians by their first name may lead to confusion among patients and family members regarding who are the physicians and who are the ancillary providers taking care of the patient, and

Whereas, house officer physicians feel that their education and training are not being valued appropriately and that their role in relation to other paraprofessional and physician extenders (advanced practice nurses, physician assistants, Pharm D pharmacists and Doctors of Physical Therapy) is being downgraded to a “medical provider status,” and

Whereas, no evidence-based studies have shown that calling physicians by their first names: 1) improves patient safety and communication between physician and staff, 2) decreases the “power gradient” of communication between health care providers, or 3) enhances a respectful demeanor between physician and staff; therefore be it

RESOLVED: That MSMS discourages the policy of calling physicians by their first names.

WAYS AND MEANS COMMITTEE FISCAL NOTE: NONE