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3 Title: Standard Practice for Members Joining or Transferring Membership

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5 Introduced by: Joseph Wilhelm, MD, for the Ingham County Delegation

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7 Original Author: Joseph Wilhelm, MD

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9 Referred To:

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11 House Action:

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14 Whereas, Article III, Section 1 of the Michigan State Medical Society (MSMS) Constitution
15 states: DEFINITION—Component societies shall consist of those county medical societies which
16 hold charters from this Society, and

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18 Whereas, Article III, Section 2 of the MSMS Constitution states: GEOGRAPHICAL SCOPE-Not
19 more than one component society shall be chartered in any county of the State. The House of
20 Delegates may, however, in its discretion, grant a charter to a component society comprising two
21 or more counties, and

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23 Whereas, Section 2.20 of the MSMS Bylaws states: MEMBERSHIP PREREQUISITE-All
24 members of the several component societies, when in good standing, are thereby and must be
25 members of this Society. All members of this Society must be members of a component medical
26 society or direct members through the Resident and Fellow Section or the Medical Student Section,
27 and

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29 Whereas, Section 2.30 of the MSMS Bylaws states: ACTIVE MEMBERS-To be eligible for
30 active membership in any component society, doctors of medicine must hold an unrevoked,
31 permanent license that is not currently under suspension in Michigan, or if unlicensed, must be
32 engaged in academic teaching, research or administration. To maintain active membership in any
33 component society, doctors of medicine must maintain active membership in this Society and
34 comply with all the provisions of the Bylaws of this Society and the component society, and

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36 Whereas, Section 4.10 of the MSMS Bylaws states: MEMBERSHIP AS PRIVILEGE - NOT
37 RIGHT—Admission to membership in any component society is not a matter of right, but one of
38 privilege, to be accorded or withheld at the sole discretion of such society. Each component society
39 may determine the manner of electing its members and shall be the sole judge of the qualifications
40 of applicants for membership therein. There shall be no discrimination on the basis of race, religion,
41 sex, ethnic origin, or sexual orientation, and

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43 Whereas, Section 4.20 of the MSMS Bylaws states: ADJOINING COUNTY—A doctor of
44 medicine whose principal location of practice is near a county may, with the permission of the
45 Board of Directors of this Society, and upon being duly elected thereto, hold membership in the
46 component society most convenient for the member to attend, and

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48 Whereas, it is the practice of our county medical societies and our MSMS that new
49 members to the Michigan State Medical Society join the component medical society of the county

50 where they either live or primarily work and the MSMS website states, "When you become a
51 member of MSMS, you also become a member of the county medical society in which you live or
52 work," and

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54 Whereas, any current member wishing to transfer membership to another county medical
55 society must first receive a good standing certification from the former county medical society and
56 approval from the new county medical society, and

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58 Whereas, the county medical societies became aware in July 2020, of physician(s) and/or
59 physician group(s) being allowed to join and/or to transfer membership to inactive counties
60 (counties with no discernable county medical society leadership, structure, operations, or
61 membership dues requirements) in which they did not live and/or primarily work, and

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63 Whereas, MSMS staff did not notify the county medical societies when these members
64 transferred membership, and

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66 Whereas, the county medical societies initiated discussion about these aberrant situations
67 with MSMS staff on July 20, 2020, and

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69 Whereas, following that discussion, the MSMS Board of Directors considered and approved
70 a motion at the October 2020, Board meeting re-interpreting the bylaws stating "that the MSMS
71 Board of Directors acknowledge MSMS Legal Counsel's interpretation that the MSMS Bylaws do
72 not expressly require a physician to live or work in a county in order to hold membership in that
73 county medical society," and

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75 Whereas, this practice of allowing physicians to join and/or transfer to counties in which
76 they do not live and/or primarily work continues to occur since the October 2020, MSMS Board
77 meeting, and

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79 Whereas, this practice creates an incentive for physicians and/or physician groups
80 regardless of where they live or work to join inactive counties without membership dues to reduce
81 their cost, and

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83 Whereas, this practice is disruptive and harmful to the integrity and vitality of the county
84 medical societies and MSMS; therefore be it

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86 RESOLVED: That the MSMS Bylaws be amended as follows: Deletions are indicated by
87 ~~strikethroughs~~, additions are indicated in **bold type**.

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89 2.20 MEMBERSHIP PREREQUISITE-All members of the several component societies, when in
90 good standing, are thereby and must be members of this Society. All members of this
91 Society must be members of a component medical society **where they live or**
92 **primarily work** or direct members through the Resident and Fellow Section or the
93 Medical Student Section.

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95 4.10 MEMBERSHIP AS PRIVILEGE - NOT RIGHT—**A doctor of medicine may apply for**
96 **component membership within the county of their residence or primary location**
97 **of practice. Any exception would require written, mutual agreement between**
98 **the physician and/or physician group, the MSMS, and the respective county(ies).**

99 Admission to membership in any component society is not a matter of right, but one
100 of privilege, to be accorded or withheld at the sole discretion of such society. Each
101 component society may determine the manner of electing its members and shall be
102 the sole judge of the qualifications of applicants for membership therein. There shall
103 be no discrimination on the basis of race, religion, sex, ethnic origin, or sexual
104 orientation.

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106 4.20 ADJOINING COUNTY—A doctor of medicine whose **residence or** principal location of
107 practice is near a county **an active, chartered county medical society** may, with the
108 permission of the Board of Directors of this Society, and upon being duly elected
109 thereto, hold membership in the **nearest active, chartered component county**
110 **medical** society most convenient for the member to attend.

111
112 5.10 CHANGE OF LOCATION – PROCEDURE—When a member of a component society, by
113 reason of change of **residence or primary practice** location, desires to transfer
114 membership to another component society, such member shall make application
115 thereto accompanied by tender of dues for the remaining half of the current year (any
116 major fraction of a half being regarded as a full half and any minor fraction being
117 disregarded). Thereupon, the secretary of the society to which application is made
118 shall request certification of standing from the Society from which the member desires
119 to transfer and upon receipt of such request the secretary of the latter Society shall
120 supply certification of good standing, provided the following requirements have been
121 met:

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124 WAYS AND MEANS COMMITTEE FISCAL NOTE: Resolutions only requesting new or revised MSMS
125 or AMA policy - \$500

STATEMENT OF URGENCY: The county medical societies became aware in July 2020 of physician(s) and/or physician group(s) being allowed to join and/or to transfer membership to inactive counties (counties with no discernable county medical society leadership, structure, operations, or membership dues requirements) in which they did not live and/or primarily work. MSMS staff did not notify the county medical societies when these members joined or transferred membership. The county medical societies initiated discussion about these aberrant situations with MSMS staff on July 20, 2020 and, following that discussion, the MSMS Board of Directors considered and approved a motion at the October 2020 Board meeting re-interpreting the bylaws stating “that the MSMS Board of Directors acknowledge MSMS Legal Counsel’s interpretation that the MSMS Bylaws do not expressly require a physician to live or work in a county in order to hold membership in that county medical society.” This practice of allowing physicians to join and/or transfer to counties in which they do not live and/or primarily work has continued to occur since the October 2020 MSMS Board meeting, creating an incentive for physicians and/or physician groups regardless of where they live or work to join inactive counties without membership dues to reduce their cost. This must be addressed at this House of Delegates as the practice is disruptive and harmful to the integrity and vitality of the county medical societies and MSMS.

Relevant MSMS Policy:

Over the past year, MSMS has deployed several strategies to address issues raised by county medical societies regarding state society operations and procedures relative to membership, advocacy, communications and the House of Delegates. Those strategies include weekly (spring 2020) and then bi-

weekly (summer 2020) virtual meetings between the MSMS CEO and county society staff, monthly meetings between MSMS departmental heads and county society staff (which have been ongoing since 2010), and a facilitator-led series of meetings to research state and county perspectives and host a series of meetings to work through how various issues will be handled going forward. The consultant work is ongoing, and the topic raised in this resolution has been part of that process. In addition, county concerns have been discussed broadly at MSMS Board meetings, the Chair and Vice Chair hosted a virtual meeting with Regional Directors representing five counties raising concerns, and the MSMS Executive Committee has also met to support strategies to establish best practices between state and county going forward.

Advise Physicians Regarding the Importance of Organized Medicine

MSMS advocates educating Michigan physicians regarding the value of membership in their respective county medical societies, MSMS and the AMA. (Res17-96A)

Relevant AMA Policy:

None

Sources:

1. <https://connect.msms.org/Membership/Join>
2. Source: January 14, 2021 MSMS Board of Directors Meeting Packet