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3 Title: Access to Menstrual Products in Correctional Facilities  
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5 Introduced by: Mara Darian, for the Medical Student Section  
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10 Referred To: Reference Committee E  
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12 House Action: APPROVE  
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15 Whereas, nationwide approximately 200,000 women are in local jails or state prisons, while  
16 16,000 women are in federal jails and prisons, and  
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18 Whereas, the length of stay for incarcerated women in Michigan prisons has increased 15.5  
19 percent between the years of 2007 and 2017 and the number of women incarcerated in Michigan  
20 prisons has increased more than 30 percent between the years of 1978 and 2015, and  
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22 Whereas, correctional facilities are severely lacking in providing menstrual products for  
23 female-identifying inmates because they have not adapted to their changing population, as women  
24 are the fastest growing population in the U.S. prison system, and  
25

26 Whereas, the menstrual cycle affects all women of child-bearing age and inadequate access  
27 to feminine hygiene products poses dire medical consequences such as toxic shock syndrome  
28 (TSS), sepsis, and ovarian cancer, and  
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30 Whereas, many women have resorted to using makeshift tampons and pads, which can be  
31 unsanitary and dangerous. In 2015, a woman in a Maryland prison developed toxic shock  
32 syndrome as a result of makeshift products which resulted in an emergency hysterectomy, and  
33

34 Whereas, basic menstrual products are not always available for women in Michigan prisons  
35 and many women often purchase products with their own wages, and  
36

37 Whereas, a box of eight tampons in Michigan correctional facilities ranges in price from  
38 \$4.97 to \$7.10, and  
39

40 Whereas, the average wage for an individual who is incarcerated in Michigan is between 14  
41 to 56 cents per hour, making it nearly infeasible to purchase feminine hygiene products at their  
42 current cost, and  
43

44 Whereas, only 13 percent of an approximately \$2 billion Michigan state corrections facilities  
45 budget is allocated to health care services for inmates, and

46           Whereas, 73 percent of women in state prisons struggle with mental health disorders,  
47 compared to 12 percent in the general population, and the symptoms of these disorders may be  
48 perpetuated when access to menstrual health and hygiene products is limited, and

49           Whereas, the United Nations declares menstrual health and hygiene a basic human right  
50 and is prioritized through its Sustainable Development Goals specifically in Goals 5.1, 5.6, and 6.2,  
51 and

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53           Whereas, the practice of restricting access to menstrual health products discriminates on  
54 the basis of sex, therefore violating the Equal Protection Clause of the Fourteenth Amendment, and

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56           Whereas, women in federal prisons already receive free hygiene products as mandated by  
57 the 2018 First Step Act, and

58  
59           Whereas, MSMS has previously considered reclassifying feminine products from paper  
60 products to medical necessities but did not pass the resolution due to a request to make these  
61 products purchasable via federally-funded Bridge cards, and

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63           Whereas, the AMA has existing policy H-525.974 Considering Feminine Hygiene Products as  
64 Medical Necessities that the AMA will work with federal, state, and specialty medical societies to  
65 advocate for the removal of barriers to feminine hygiene products in state and local prisons and  
66 correctional institutions to ensure incarcerated women be provided free of charge, the appropriate  
67 type and quantity of feminine hygiene products including tampons for their needs; therefore be it

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69           RESOLVED: That MSMS supports access to free menstrual products at all Michigan state  
70 and local correctional facilities, regardless of an institution's private, state, or federal funding  
71 source.

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

**Relevant MSMS Policy:**

None

**Relevant AMA Policy:**

**Considering Feminine Hygiene Products as Medical Necessities H-525.974**

Our AMA will: (1) encourage the Internal Revenue Service to classify feminine hygiene products as medical necessities; and (2) work with federal, state, and specialty medical societies to advocate for the removal of barriers to feminine hygiene products in state and local prisons and correctional institutions to ensure incarcerated women be provided free of charge, the appropriate type and quantity of feminine hygiene products including tampons for their needs.

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