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3 **Title:** Support for Water Safety
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5 **Introduced by:** Bryan Huffman, MD, for the Ottawa County Delegation
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7 **Original Author:** Bryan Huffman, MD
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9 **Referred To:** Reference Committee D
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11 **House Action:** **APPROVED**
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14 Whereas, Michigan has the longest shoreline of any state in the continental United States,
15 and

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17 Whereas, according to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention’s statistics, drowning
18 is the leading cause of death in the USA in children aged 1-4, and the second leading cause of
19 death in children 5-15 behind auto accidents, and

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21 Whereas, a session of swim lessons given between the ages of 1-4 has been shown to
22 decrease the risk of drowning by 88 percent, and

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24 Whereas, Michigan prides itself in being the “Great Lakes State,” and

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26 Whereas, every child in Michigan will encounter multiple situations with the risk of
27 drowning every year, and

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29 Whereas, 1,155 people drowned in the Great Lakes between 2010 and 2022, with Lake
30 Michigan being the deadliest Great Lake, accounting for over half of all the Great Lakes drownings
31 each year, and

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33 Whereas, Michigan does not have lifeguards at the vast majority of its waterfront state
34 parks and most state parks lack basic rescue equipment. Michigan also does not require swim
35 lessons as part of k-12 education, and

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37 Whereas, several groups, including the Great Lakes Surf Rescue Project and the Michigan
38 Drowning Prevention Alliance, are already working to improve water safety in Michigan through
39 increasing availability of swim lessons, promoting lifeguards at state and county parks, providing
40 community lifejackets at swimming areas, training surf lifeguards, and lobbying for increased state
41 support for drowning prevention, and

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43 Whereas, Medicine should have a vocal supportive role in preventing the number one cause
44 of childhood death, and

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46 Whereas, several other groups have this objective as their main mission. Therefore, MSMS
47 does not need to lead this charge, but should be supportive of their efforts, and

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49 Whereas, MSMS currently has no official policy on drowning prevention; therefore be it

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51 RESOLVED: That MSMS adopt the following policy supporting water safety in Michigan:
52 MSMS supports (1) early childhood swim lessons for every child in Michigan with the goal
53 of "drown-proofing" the children of our state; (2) the availability of basic water rescue equipment at
54 all public beaches including throw rings and lifejackets; (3) the presence of lifeguards at public
55 beaches in Michigan; and (4) legislative efforts to protect entities that hire lifeguards from liability
56 in a manner similar to good Samaritan laws; and be it further

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58 RESOLVED: That MSMS provide visible support to the efforts of other groups that are
59 working to further MSMS stated policy on water safety issues in Michigan. This support would
60 include vocal support of efforts to improve water safety, and adding our support to these groups at
61 legislative hearings in Lansing regarding water safety.

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64 WAYS AND MEANS COMMITTEE FISCAL NOTE: \$1,000-\$2,000

Relevant MSMS Policy - None

Relevant AMA Policy

Swimming Safety H-10.983

Our AMA (1) strongly supports barrier fencing and pool covers for residential pools, early water safety, and water awareness programs and (2) encourages swimming pool manufacturers and pool chemical suppliers to distribute educational materials that promote swimming and water safety.

Sources:

1. CDC drowning statistics: <http://www.cdc.gov/drowning/facts>
2. Swim lesson drowning risk decrease: R Brenner, et. al. Arch Pediatr Med. Mar 2009, 163 (3): 203-10.
3. Great Lakes drowning statistics: Great Lake Surf Rescue Project, <https://glsrp.org>