

AMERICAN MEDICAL ASSOCIATION HOUSE OF DELEGATES

Resolution: 404
(A-08)

Introduced by: American College of Preventive Medicine

Subject: Modern Chemicals Policies

Referred to: Reference Committee D
(Robert T. M. Phillips, MD, PhD, Chair)

1 Whereas, The chemical industry is an important industry in the US, and its contributions to
2 health and human development are widely recognized, and the global scale of industrial chemical
3 production is immense and is expected to grow four-fold by 2050; and
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5 Whereas, Many chemicals that are useful to society are also known to be hazardous to human
6 biology, particularly in utero and in developing children; and
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8 Whereas, The California Medical Association and the Washington State Medical Association
9 recently called upon our AMA to request that the US implement a modern, comprehensive
10 chemicals policy in line with current scientific knowledge on human health, and requiring a full
11 evaluation of the health impacts of both newly developed and existing industrial chemicals now;
12 and
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14 Whereas, There are long-standing deficiencies in the federal regulation of industrial chemicals,
15 most notably in the Toxic Substances Control Act (TSCA), and the University of California
16 (UC) documented in a March 2006 report to the California Legislature that TSCA's deficiencies
17 have produced several gaps. These include a US chemical Data Gap (defined in the report as
18 insufficient information on the toxicity of the vast majority of chemicals in commercial
19 circulation), Safety Gap (insurance that the production and use of goods does not come at the
20 expense of public and environmental health), and Technology Gap (concerns that the vast
21 majority of chemical products are manufactured in the US using technologies developed 40 to 50
22 years ago); and
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24 Whereas, The UC report, prepared by a multidisciplinary group of experts, illustrates that these
25 gaps have prevented public agencies from effectively assessing the hazards of the great majority
26 of chemicals in commercial circulation or controlling those of greatest concern, and that these
27 Gaps are adversely affecting public, occupational, and environmental health, as well as business,
28 industry, and government; and
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30 Whereas, On a global level "fundamental changes are needed in the way that societies manage
31 chemicals." Environment Ministers, Health Ministers and other delegates from over 100
32 governments together with representatives of civil society and the private sector declared in
33 Dubai, February 6, 2006, that "the environment worldwide continues to suffer from air, water
34 and land contamination, impairing the health and welfare of millions." They adopted the

1 Strategic Approach to International Chemicals Management (SAICM), a global plan of action
2 whose stated goal is: "to achieve the sound management of chemicals throughout their life-cycle
3 so that, by 2020, chemicals are used and produced in ways that lead to the minimization of
4 significant adverse effects on human health and the environment"; therefore be it

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6 RESOLVED, That our American Medical Association encourage the training of medical
7 students about the health effects of toxic exposures on patients (New HOD Policy); and be it
8 further

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10 RESOLVED, That our AMA call upon Congress to craft and implement a modern,
11 comprehensive chemicals policy, to (1) Close the Data Gap by improving the efficiency of the
12 chemicals market by implementing measures that improve the flow of information regarding
13 toxicity from chemical producers to businesses, consumers, workers, and government agencies;
14 (2) Close the Safety Gap by reducing the commercial circulation of the most hazardous
15 chemicals by identifying those of greatest concern and implementing measures that motivate
16 businesses to reduce their usage and improve the safety of their usage of these substances
17 through toxics use reduction and other relevant strategies; and (3) Close the Technology Gap by
18 introducing a range of other incentives to encourage businesses to invest in green chemistry
19 innovation, and by supporting "green" chemistry research and education (Directive to Take
20 Action); and be it further

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22 RESOLVED: That our AMA carry this resolution to the World Medical Association urging
23 involvement in the Strategic Approach to International Chemicals Management (SAICM)
24 process leading to the sound management of chemicals throughout their life-cycle so that, by
25 2020, chemicals are used and produced in ways that minimize adverse effects on human health
26 and the environment. (Directive to Take Action)

Fiscal Note: Implement accordingly at estimated staff cost of \$4,365.

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