

WASHINGTON STATE MEDICAL ASSOCIATION
HOUSE OF DELEGATES

Resolution: B-4
(A-20)

Subject: Protecting Emergency Reproductive Health Care
Services in Religiously Affiliated Health Care Entities

Introduced by: Judith Kimelman, MD, Delegate
Constance Mao, MD, Delegate
King County Medical Society

Referred to: Reference Committee B

1 WHEREAS, healthcare professionals have a duty to provide appropriate, evidence-based
2 reproductive care in emergency situations within the professional's scope of practice, education,
3 training, and experience and within the accepted standard of care; and
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5 WHEREAS, failure to provide appropriate care can violate the standard of care or result in added
6 morbidity or mortality; and
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8 WHEREAS, religiously affiliated-health care entities' restrictive policies prohibit certain
9 reproductive health procedures based on the religious directives and doctrine; and
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11 WHEREAS, services related to management of miscarriage or ectopic pregnancies may be
12 limited by the religious directives in these hospitals when fetal cardiac activity is still observed;
13 and
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15 WHEREAS, not providing timely treatment to patients with inevitable miscarriage, incomplete
16 miscarriage or ectopic pregnancy can jeopardize patients' health leading to death or
17 complications, including the need for blood transfusions, additional surgeries, prolonged
18 antibiotics, or long term damage to the reproductive tract that could potentially limit future
19 fertility; and
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21 WHEREAS, when restrictive policies exist, healthcare professionals are put in the difficult
22 position of having to withhold needed care until patients' conditions deteriorate to a point where
23 care is permitted; and
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25 WHEREAS, healthcare professionals employed by religiously-affiliated hospitals risk
26 repercussions including loss of employment if they provide care that might be interpreted as
27 going against the religious directives and provide care at a later stage when earlier would have
28 been less hazardous for the patient and physician's liability; and
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30 WHEREAS, the WSMA supports "efforts to protect the sanctity of the physician-patient
31 relationship and the freedom of health providers to provide evidence-based, medically accurate
32 health care services and information to patients in all care settings;" THEREFORE BE IT
33

34 RESOLVED, that in urgent situations involving reproductive health care, the WSMA establish
35 policy that supports efforts to protect healthcare professionals' ability, without fear of penalty
36 or risk of losing their employment, to use their best clinical judgment to provide appropriate care
37 within the professional's scope of practice, education, training, and experience and within the
38 accepted standard of care when delay could result in complications. (New HOD Policy)

Fiscal Note: None

WSMA Policy

Physician-Patient Relationship, Sanctity of

The WSMA supports efforts to protect the sanctity of the physician-patient relationship and the freedom of health providers to provide evidence-based, medically accurate health care services and information to patients in all care settings. (B-6, A-15)

HOUSE ACTION: ADOPTED _____ ADOPTED AS AMENDED _____
FILED _____ REFERRED _____ NOT ADOPTED _____