

**AMA HOUSE OF DELEGATES  
APCR DELEGATE'S REPORT  
NOVEMBER 2020**

**EXECUTIVE SUMMARY**

Due to COVID-19, the 2020 American Medical Association (AMA) Interim Meeting was replaced with a five-day video conference. Related to pharmaceutical research, the House of Delegates adopted policy, "That our AMA support ending the practice of using race as a proxy for biology or genetics in medical education, research and clinical practice." As of December 12, 2020, the Proceedings of the Meeting remain a work in progress. When available, each file will be posted at <https://www.ama-assn.org/house-delegates/special-meeting/proceedings-november-2020-special-meeting-house-delegates>.

**INTRODUCTION**

The 2020 Interim Meeting of the American Medical Association (AMA) was suspended due to the ongoing SARS-CoV-2 (COVID-19) pandemic. In lieu of the usual four-day Interim Meeting, the House of Delegates (HOD) convened virtually for five days from Friday through Tuesday, November 13-17, 2020, for a Special Meeting to consider essential business. A Resolution Committee screened about 130 Resolutions submitted, so that only the most important and/or the most urgent were accepted for debate.

As many as 1516 people viewed the meeting on Zoom. That figure includes voting delegates, alternate delegates, AMA trustees, other members, and staff from across the Federation. Even with the prioritization process, the business sessions of the House took nearly twice as long as a typical Interim and as long as a typical Annual Meeting, 13.5 hours. This does not include the reference committee hearings, which, despite limited agendas, required relatively more time than at an in-person meeting.

**RECOGNIZING RACE AS A SOCIAL CONSTRUCT**

Health equity initiatives in the U.S. were a focus of multiple Resolutions at this House of Delegates meeting. To that end, the AMA House of Delegates (HOD) adopted new policy to:

- Acknowledge that, although the primary drivers of racial health inequity are systemic and structural racism, racism and unconscious bias within medical research and health care delivery have caused and continue to cause harm to marginalized communities and society as a whole.

- Recognize that race is a social construct and is distinct from ethnicity, genetic ancestry, or biology.
- Support ending the practice of using race as a proxy for biology or genetics in medical education, research, and clinical practice.

### **APCR SPONSORED RESOLUTION**

Within the House of Delegates, APCR is part of the Section Council on Preventive Medicine (SCPM). Other SCPM members are American College of Preventive Medicine, American College of Occupational and Environmental Medicine, Aerospace Medical Association, American Association of Public Health Physicians, and American Society of Addiction Medicine. APCR joined our fellow SCPM members and the Iowa Medical Society to sponsor a resolution calling for “FULL COMMITMENT BY OUR AMA TO THE BETTERMENT AND STRENGTHENING OF PUBLIC HEALTH SYSTEMS”. The HOD adopted our Resolution. As a result, AMA has a new policy:

**“Our American Medical Association will champion the betterment of public health by enhancing advocacy and support for programs and initiatives that strengthen public health systems, to address pandemic threats, health inequities and social determinants of health outcomes.”**

### **OTHER ITEMS RELATED TO PHARMACEUTICALS**

The American College of Allergy, Asthma and Immunology sponsored a Resolution asking that, “Our American Medical Association support legislation or regulatory action to require that in the event a patient cannot afford the medication prescribed, either because it is not on the formulary or it is priced higher than other medications on the formulary, the pharmacist must communicate to the prescriber a medication option in the same class prescribed with the lowest out-of-pocket cost to the patient.” The Resolution was referred for further study.

The Medical Association of Georgia sponsored a Resolution asking that, “our AMA rescind its joint statement with the American Pharmacists Association and American Society of Health System Pharmacists and update it with a joint statement notifying patients that further studies are ongoing to clarify any potential benefit of hydroxychloroquine and combination therapies for the treatment of COVID-19.” The Resolution was “Not Adopted” (the HOD’s strongest statement in opposition to a Resolution).

Board of Trustees Report 5 examined Conflict of Interest on FDA Advisory Committees. In adopting the recommendations of the report, the House of Delegates (HOD) reaffirmed existing AMA policy that FDA conflicts of interest requirements should not overrule scientific evidence in making policy decisions and the FDA should include clinical experts on advisory committees.” However, the HOD recognized the need to ensure that COIs do not compromise the integrity of

the FDA advisory committee process and did adopt new policy urging the FDA to streamline the COI process to reduce any unnecessary documentation, administrative barriers, or delays that might hinder the participation of qualified physicians on FDA advisory committees. Additional details are in the Report of Reference Committee B at <https://www.ama-assn.org/system/files/2020-11/nov20-ref-com-b-annotated.pdf>.

## **JAMA NETWORK OPEN**

*JAMA Network Open*<sup>™</sup>, AMA's open-access journal is now one and one-half years old. The journal is intended to be an international platform for investigators around the world, moving away from the U.S.-centric focus of many journals. Content is available without charge to both AMA members and nonmembers. The online format provides room to publish many manuscripts for which there simply was not enough room in the print journals of the JAMA Network (<https://jamanetwork.com>). Authors can login and submit manuscripts using their ORCID accounts (<https://orcid.org>).

## **LOGISTICS**

Each Resolution and Report was posted on the AMA website at least several days prior to the meeting. This allowed time for online comments and responses to be collected and summarized by the Reference Committees. Individual Zoom logins allowed all AMA members to testify at all Reference Committee hearings and for each Reference Committee to meet privately to prepare its report. In addition to Zoom, Delegates logged in simultaneously on Lumi (<https://www.lumiglobal.com>) so that their votes could be recorded securely. AMA's 2021 State Legislative Meeting and National Advocacy Conference will be virtual. The 2021 Annual Meeting is scheduled for Friday to Wednesday, June 12-16, at the Hyatt Regency Chicago or virtual depending on the pandemic.

## **PERSONAL NOTES**

It is always a great honor to represent the Academy of Physicians in Clinical Research in the AMA House of Delegates. At this meeting I was privileged to be one of seven members of the Reference Committee on Amendments to Constitution and Bylaws. It was our Committee that took testimony and synthesized the report on items related to health equity initiatives. A copy of our report is available at <https://www.ama-assn.org/system/files/2020-11/nov20-ref-com-conby-annotated.pdf>.

In August of this year, Judith Jones, MD, PhD passed away. Judy was a former member of the APCR Board of Trustees. She also was President of the Pharmaceutical Education and Research Institute (<http://peri.org/in-memory-peri-president-judith-jones>). Since 2012, Judy had been one of two physician members of the AMA-hosted United States Adopted Names (USAN)

Council ([https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/United\\_States\\_Adopted\\_Name](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/United_States_Adopted_Name)). The USAN Council assigns the nonproprietary (generic) names for the active ingredients in all drugs marketed in the US. US pharmaceutical research is responsible for almost half of the new pharmaceutical ingredients marketed anywhere in the world. AMA cosponsors the USAN Council along with the US Pharmacopeia (USP) and the American Pharmacists Association (APhA). The FDA has a liaison member. On December 4, I was reelected Chairman of the USAN Council for another year, but it will not be the same without Judy.

The AMA Delegation from MedChi – The Maryland State Medical Society provides important backup and logistic support for Maryland based delegates including myself at HOD meetings. Maryland-based internists Willarda Edwards and Ilse Levin serve on the AMA Board of Trustees. Johns Hopkins Assistant Professor Padmini Ranasinghe, MD, MPH is a member of the Council on Science & Public Health. I am a life member of MedChi and I have represented MedChi in the US Pharmacopeial Convention since 2008 and most recently at the June 2020 virtual USP Convention Meeting (<https://www.usp.org/about/usp-2020-convention>).

Finally, I need to thank my Alternate Delegate and APCR Board member Mike Ybarra. APCR is well-served by Mike's advocacy and his work with the AMA Foundation (<https://amafoundation.org/stronger-together>).

## CONCLUSION

Even during the pandemic, AMA membership continues to grow. AMA is becoming increasingly important in creating the future of medicine. At most of its meetings, Issues relating to drug research, development, availability, pricing, and promotion are a focus for the House of Delegates (HOD). Within the HOD, APCR is the only voice focused on clinical research.

Please feel free to call upon me if I can answer any questions - Thanks!

*Peter*

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