

AMERICAN MEDICAL ASSOCIATION HOUSE OF DELEGATES

Resolution: 103  
(A-08)

Introduced by: Georgia Delegation

Subject: AMA Progress on Removing Patient Translation Costs from Physician  
Responsibility

Referred to: Reference Committee A  
(Linda B. Ford, MD, Chair)

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- 1 Whereas, The Department of Health and Human Services and the Office of Civil Rights  
2 continues to require physicians to pay for translation services for the disabled or non-English  
3 speaking patients when other alternatives are not possible; and  
4  
5 Whereas, This continues to be an unfunded mandate by the federal government; and  
6  
7 Whereas, Current AMA policy states that physicians cannot be expected to provide and fund  
8 these translation services for their patients; therefore be it  
9  
10 RESOLVED, That our American Medical Association provide an update to its membership on  
11 the progress it has made on eliminating payment for translation services for patients by the  
12 physician and their future plans for addressing this problem. (Directive to Take Action)

Fiscal Note: Implement accordingly at estimated staff cost of \$1,859.

Received: 05/07/08

## **RELEVANT AMA POLICY**

### **H-160.924 Use of Language Interpreters in the Context of the Patient-Physician Relationship**

AMA policy is that: (1) further research is necessary on how the use of interpreters--both those who are trained and those who are not--impacts patient care; (2) treating physicians shall respect and assist the patients' choices whether to involve capable family members or friends to provide language assistance that is culturally sensitive and competent, with or without an interpreter who is competent and culturally sensitive; (3) physicians continue to be resourceful in their use of other appropriate means that can help facilitate communication--including print materials, digital and other electronic or telecommunication services with the understanding, however, of these tools' limitations--to aid LEP patients' involvement in meaningful decisions about their care; and (4) physicians cannot be expected to provide and fund these translation services for their patients, as the Department of Health and Human Services' policy guidance currently requires; when trained medical interpreters are needed, the costs of their services shall be paid directly to the interpreters by patients and/or third party payers and physicians shall not be required to participate in payment arrangements. (BOT Rep. 8, I-02; Reaffirmation I-03; Reaffirmed in lieu of Res. 722, A-07)