

*Article****AMA to Train Health Providers on Health Effects of Toxic Chemical Exposures***

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The 2008 Annual Meeting Highlights for the AMA House of Delegates Reference Committee on Amendments to the Constitution and Bylaws was recently published on the internet.

Of immense interest was the statement declaring that, "The AMA also will encourage the training of medical students, physicians and other health professionals on the human health effects of toxic chemical exposures."

While this sounds very honorable, it may or may not lead to better care for toxically injured people, such as those suffering from chemical injuries, multiple chemical sensitivity, autism, vaccine injuries, and chronic fatigue syndrome.

In order for this statement to be meaningful, the AMA would have to be willing to accept advancing scientific evidence of chemical toxicity. Should the AMA deny this science, as is so

commonly seen when industry debunks research studies, this declaration may indeed be useless. Claiming an exposure is too insignificant to cause any health effects has been a common way to deny toxic injury.

In addition, physicians would need to be trained to believe their patients' reports of injury and the relationship of certain exposures to symptoms. If physicians continue to simply dismiss patient reports as psychogenic, the truth will remain evasive.

If, on the other hand, the AMA takes new research and patient reports seriously, this may be the beginning of improved health care. Many illnesses are linked to environmental exposure, including cancer, asthma, allergies, autism, chronic fatigue syndrome, chemical sensitivity, Parkinson's, Alzheimer's, and more.

A shift toward recognizing how toxic exposure impacts human health would be meaningful in terms of improving the health of the injured and avoiding toxic injury for the masses through education and stricter regulations.



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The same declaration adopts a policy to “recognize that insufficient evidence exists to specifically restrict use of high fructose corn syrup or other fructose-containing sweeteners in the food supply, or to require the use of warning labels on products containing high fructose corn syrup.”

This is most discouraging and lends to doubt as to whether the AMA will actually recognize true toxic exposures and “encourage the training of medical students, physicians and other health professionals on the human health effects of toxic chemical exposures.”

The full resolution on toxics education states:

“The AMA resolved to call upon the federal government to implement a comprehensive chemicals policy that is in line with current scientific knowledge on human and environmental health, and that requires a full evaluation of the health impacts of both newly developed and industrial chemicals now in use. The AMA also will support the restructuring of the Toxic Substances Control Act to help federal and state agencies reduce the use of industrial chemicals, and efficiently assess the human and environmental health hazards that result from them. In addition, the AMA will support the Strategic Approach to International Chemicals process leading to the sound management of chemicals throughout their lifecycle so that by 2020 chemicals are used and produced in ways that minimize adverse effects on human health and the environment. The AMA also will encourage the training of medical students, physicians and other health professionals on the human health effects of toxic chemical exposures.”

Reference

2008 Annual Meeting Highlights for the AMA House of Delegates
Reference Committee on Amendments to the Constitution and Bylaws. 2008. *American Medical Association*. Retrieved on September 14, 2009 from <http://www.ama-assn.org/ama/pub/upload/mm/471/refcomhighlights.pdf>

