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SUBJECT: OPPOSITION TO PATIENT DISCRIMINATION OF OSTEOPATHIC PHYSICIANS BECAUSE OF RACE, COLOR, RELIGION, GENDER, SEXUAL ORIENTATION, GENDER IDENTITY OR NATIONAL ORIGIN

SUBMITTED BY: Iowa Osteopathic Medical Association

REFERRED TO: Committee on Public Affairs

WHEREAS, the American Osteopathic Association (AOA) has historically taken a strong position against osteopathic physicians discriminating against patients because of, but not limited to their race, color, religion, gender, sexual orientation, gender identity or national origin; and

WHEREAS, the AOA Code of Ethics assures that patients have autonomy and freedom of choice when selecting an osteopathic physician; and

WHEREAS, some patients have refused to allow a physician treat them based solely on the physician’s race, color, religion, gender, sexual orientation, gender identity or national origin; and

WHEREAS, physicians have no similar protections against patients refusing to receive care from a physician due to the physician's race, color, creed, religion, gender, sexual orientation, gender identity or national origin; and

WHEREAS, this discrimination is an abuse and misinterpretation by the patient of their protected autonomy; and

WHEREAS, physicians, especially those in areas with limited physician availability may be called upon to treat a patient who has previously declined to be treated by a particular physician are compelled by medical ethics to provide emergency treatment to these patients; and

WHEREAS, without the intervention of these physicians, the patient would be at great risk of loss of life or limb; and

WHEREAS, physicians acting in these situations place themselves at significant risk of being accused of acting unethically; and

WHEREAS, the AOA has no statement supporting these physicians in providing life or limb saving treatment despite the patient expressing a desire not to be treated by the physician due solely to the physician's race, color, religion, gender, sexual orientation, gender identity or national origin; now, therefore be it

RESOLVED, that the American Osteopathic Association (AOA) deems it ethical for osteopathic physicians to provide care to a patient in LIFE THREATENING
EMERGENCIES even when the patient has refused treatment from the physician because of the physician's race, color, religion, gender, sexual orientation, gender identity or national origin; and, be it further

RESOLVED, that the American Osteopathic Association (AOA) supports the education of the public that osteopathic physicians should be evaluated by their skill and knowledge rather than by race, color, religion, gender sexual orientation, gender identity or national origin.

ACTION TAKEN _____________________

DATE ______________________________