WHEREAS, The Vermont Medical Society (VMS) initiated a survey of Vermont physicians in order to better understand their views on satisfaction with practice, responsibility for health care in the ideal system, and health care priorities; and

WHEREAS, Included in the 24 item survey were six questions on responsibility for health care in the ideal system developed by the New Hampshire Medical Society; and

WHEREAS, Physicians were asked to indicate whether they “strongly agree”, “agree”, were “neutral”, “disagree”, or “strongly disagree” with each of the 24 statements; and

WHEREAS, Two hundred Vermont physicians responded to the survey between June 1 and June 30, 2008; and

WHEREAS, While the gender of respondents appears to generally reflect the demography of Vermont physicians as reported by the VTDOH, the age distribution was somewhat younger and there was a higher percentage of primary care physicians responding than the demography of Vermont physicians; and

WHEREAS, Eighty-four percent (169) of those responding indicated that they “strongly agreed” or “agreed” with the following statement: “In the ideal healthcare system, basic healthcare would be available to all individuals as part of the social contract, a right similar to basic education, police and fire protection; and

WHEREAS, Sixty-eight percent (137) of those responding indicated they “strongly agreed” or “agreed” with the following statement: “I would favor a simplified payer system in which public funds, collected through taxes, were used to pay directly for services to meet the basic health care needs of all citizens; “ and

WHEREAS, Ninety-one percent (182) of those responding indicated that they “strongly agreed” or “agreed” with the following statement: “Putting aside paperwork and administrative issues, I find the practice of medicine deeply satisfying;“ and

WHEREAS, Eighty-seven percent (174) of those responding indicated that they “strongly agreed” or “agreed” with the following statement: “Paperwork and administrative issues interfere with my ability to serve patients well; and

WHEREAS, Ninety-seven percent (194) of those responding indicated that they “strongly agreed” or “agreed” with the following statement: “The health of individuals can be enormously affected by their personal behaviors and choices;” and
WHEREAS, Ninety percent (181) of those responding indicated that they “strongly agreed” or “agreed” with the following statement: Continued under-reimbursement by Medicaid will result in access problems for low-income Vermonters;” and

WHEREAS, Ninety-one percent (183) of those responding indicated that they “strongly agreed” or “agreed” with the following statement: “Facing a shortage of primary care physicians and a rapidly aging population, the recruitment and retention of physicians should be a high priority;” now therefore be it

RESOLVED, In order to ensure access to high quality health care services, the Vermont Medical Society urges the General Assembly and the Administration to make the issues related to recruitment and retention of physicians a high legislative priority; and be it further

RESOLVED, The Vermont Medical Society supports the concept that basic healthcare would be available to all individuals as part of the social contract; and be it further.

RESOLVED, The Vermont Medical Society supports a simplified payer system to pay directly for services, in which paperwork and administrative issues are minimized, under-reimbursement by Medicaid is addressed; and be it further.

RESOLVED, The Vermont Medical Society encourages individuals to take greater responsibility for their personal behaviors and choices to the extent they are able; and be it further

RESOLVED, The Vermont Medical Society’s survey makes it clear that while Vermont physicians are dedicated to the profession of medicine and the care of their patients, the present system of financing impedes physicians from being able to adequately provide for the health care needs of all Vermonters.