VERMONT MEDICAL SOCIETY
RESOLUTION

Patient Education & Personal Responsibility for Health

Adopted October 29, 2011

Whereas, unhealthy lifestyle choices drive direct health care costs as well as indirect costs, relating to disability, workers compensation, absenteeism and productivity issues; and

Whereas, according to a recent Columbia University study published in the Lancet, obesity is fast replacing tobacco as the single most important preventable cause of chronic non-communicable diseases, and will add an extra 7.8 million cases of diabetes, 6.8 million cases of heart disease and stroke, and 539,000 cases of cancer in the United States by 2030; and

Whereas, because of obesity, the United States can expect to spend an extra 2.6 percent on its overall healthcare bill, or $66 billion per year; and

Whereas, only 3% of Americans actually meet healthy behavior guidelines in all four lifestyle behaviors – tobacco use, sedentary behavior, unhealthy weight, unhealthy diet; and

Whereas, the number of working-age adults from 1997 to 2006 who reported being diagnosed with at least 1 of 7 major chronic conditions (heart disease, hypertension, stroke, diabetes, emphysema, asthma and cancer) grew by 23% to a total of nearly 58 million; and

Whereas, Act 48 amended 18 V.S.A. § 5 to require the department of health to create a state health improvement plan in order to encourage the design of healthy communities and to promote policy initiatives that contribute to community, school, and workplace wellness, which may include providing assistance to employers for wellness program grants, encouraging employers to promote employee engagement in healthy behaviors, and encouraging the appropriate use of the health care system; and

Whereas, Act 48 also added 18 V.S.A. § 9371 that lists 14 principles as the framework for reforming health care in Vermont; and

Whereas, under principle (7) of section 9371, individuals have a personal responsibility to maintain their own health and to use health resources wisely, and all individuals should have a financial stake in the health services they receive; now therefore be it

RESOLVED, that the Vermont Medical Society work with the Department of Health to create a state health improvement plan; and be it further

RESOLVED, that the VMS work with the Green Mountain Care Board and other organizations to promote greater personal responsibility by individuals in maintaining their own health and the wise use of health resources.