WHEREAS, non-consensual pelvic exams are performed on unconscious patients under anesthesia for “learning opportunities” of medical students⁴, and

WHEREAS, although the rate of non-consensual pelvic exams is unknown because they are not reported and patients are unaware that they are being performed, the procedure is prevalent in teaching hospitals⁵, and

WHEREAS, a recent survey of 101 medical students from seven American medical schools indicated that 92% of students had performed pelvic exams on anesthetized female patients where 61% of those students didn’t have consent from the patients involved⁶, and

WHEREAS, the Association of American Medical Colleges (AAMC) believes that pelvic examinations on women under anesthesia, without their knowledge and approval is unethical and unacceptable⁷, and the American College of Obstetricians and Gynecologists (ACOG) states that pelvic examinations on an anesthetized woman that offer her no personal benefit and are performed solely for teaching purposes should be performed only with her specific informed consent⁸, and

WHEREAS, the supreme court case Schloendorff v Society of New York Hospital (1914), establishes that a clinician who performs a procedure on a patient without informed consent is held liable at the court of law⁹, and

WHEREAS, informed consent requires that the patient has capacity, has enough information to base their decision on, and is free of coercion⁵, and

WHEREAS, institutional policies for physical exam consent do not clearly distinguish between intimate exams and those on other “neutral” body parts in current processes, patients view intimate exams as necessitating additional consent⁹, and

WHEREAS, performing pelvic exams without informed consent violates one's inherent bodily autonomy, basic rights, and trust⁵, and

WHEREAS, non-consensual pelvic exams may harm the patient psychologically and physically⁷, and

WHEREAS, medical students who perform these pelvic exams may also be negatively impacted such as experiencing PTSD, guilt, and distrust⁵, and

WHEREAS, medical students who do not conduct intimate exams because of the lack of consent may jeopardize their career by showing “unwarranted disobedience” to preceptors or attendings⁵, and
WHEREAS, 21 states have outlawed unauthorized pelvic exams\(^8\), and
WHEREAS, in Missouri, House Bill No. 459 has been proposed to ban non-consensual pelvic exams\(^9\), and
WHEREAS, House Bill No. 459 has not progressed from its assigned committee\(^10\); therefore, be it
RESOLVED, that our MSMA oppose non-consensual pelvic exams of anesthetized patients solely for learning purposes in the state of Missouri.

Fiscal Note: None

Current Policy: None

References: