

1 **Adopted as amended**

2 **RESOLUTION 16-206**

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4 **(Referred to Reference Committee B)**

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6 **Subject:** Pennsylvania Medical Society Support for a Moratorium on Fracking  
7 **Introduced by:** Michael DellaVecchia, MD, on behalf of the Philadelphia County Medical Society  
8 **Author:** Walter Tsou, MD, Philadelphia County Medical Society  
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10 WHEREAS, As physicians of Pennsylvania, we care first and foremost about the health of our community  
11 and believe that when an activity raises potential harm to human health, precautionary measures should  
12 be taken until cause and effect relationships are fully established scientifically; and  
13

14 WHEREAS, Act 13 (Impact Fee) of 2012 includes a provision that allows disclosure of proprietary chemicals  
15 after a physician places a request in writing, but prohibits further disclosure of the chemicals to other  
16 doctors or written into medical records, even if needed to properly care for a patient<sup>1</sup>; and  
17

18 WHEREAS, Hydraulic fracturing, or fracking, is a method of oil and gas removal that involves blasting  
19 between 4-6 million gallons of water, sand and chemicals under high pressure deep into the earth to break  
20 up the Marcellus Shale to allow oil and gas extraction; and  
21

22 WHEREAS, The Marcellus Shale covers about 60% of Pennsylvania and much of the mineral rights have  
23 been leased to gas drilling companies; and  
24

25 WHEREAS, The gas drilling industry has identified around 60 chemicals regularly used in fracking and  
26 hundreds that could potentially be used<sup>2</sup>; and  
27

28 WHEREAS, The gas drilling industry has many “proprietary” chemicals which are trade secrets so there is  
29 no way to ascertain their toxicity, but fracking routinely employs numerous toxic chemicals, including  
30 benzene and other volatile organic compounds<sup>3</sup> and can also expose humans to harm from lead, arsenic,  
31 and radioactivity brought back to the surface with fracking flowback fluid; and  
32

33 WHEREAS, The gas industry has lobbied to exempt their industry from federal regulations of many  
34 important environmental laws, including the Safe Drinking Act, the Clean Air Act, the Clean Water Act,  
35 National Environmental Policy Act, Resource Conservation and Recovery Act, and CERCLA (the  
36 Superfund Act) hampering any federal oversight of the industry<sup>4</sup>; and

37 WHEREAS, Many fracking chemicals and the radioactive isotopes of flowback fluid are known  
38 carcinogens and evidence is mounting throughout the country that these chemicals are making their  
39 way into aquifers and drinking water<sup>5</sup>, and  
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<sup>1</sup><http://www.palivablefuture.org/content/statement-commonwealth-supreme-court-hearing-oral-argument-controversial-health-professional>

<sup>2</sup> <https://fracfocusdata.org/DisclosureSearch/Search.aspx>

<sup>3</sup> Ibid.

<sup>4</sup> [https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Exemptions\\_for\\_hydraulic\\_fracturing\\_under\\_United\\_States\\_federal\\_law](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Exemptions_for_hydraulic_fracturing_under_United_States_federal_law)

<sup>5</sup><http://extension.psu.edu/natural-resources/water/marcellus-shale/waste-water/current-and-emerging-treatment-and-disposal-technologies>

1 WHEREAS, Water quality can be further threatened by methane contamination tied to drilling<sup>6</sup> and the  
2 fracturing of rock formations, and highlighted by footage of people in fracked areas setting fire to  
3 methane-laced water from kitchen faucets; and

4 WHEREAS, The Delaware River water basin, which provides the water supply for 15 million people<sup>7</sup>  
5 including those in Eastern Pennsylvania, would be put at risk if a fracking accident occurred; and  
6

7 WHEREAS, About 9% of gas wells leak methane directly into the atmosphere<sup>8</sup>, a greenhouse gas which is  
8 86 times more potent than carbon dioxide as a contributor to global warming<sup>9</sup>; and

9 WHEREAS, The impoundment ponds of fracking flowback are subject to leakage and spillovers of toxic  
10 chemicals and radioactivity, the disposal of fracking fluid in waste injection wells can cause earthquakes;  
11 and

12 WHEREAS, Many individuals and families have had nosebleeds, dermatological, respiratory, neurological  
13 and GI symptoms<sup>10</sup>, and the industry has denied any wrongdoing but has forced non-disclosure  
14 agreements in exchange for fresh water and money; and  
15

16 WHEREAS, Pennsylvania’s legislature has refused to create a health registry, collect data, or study the  
17 health effects of fracking, essentially obstructing the scientific study of this industry; and

18 WHEREAS, The August 2016 EPA science advisory board criticized the June 2015 EPA study on hydraulic  
19 fracturing noting “that the EPA did not support quantitatively its conclusion about lack of evidence for  
20 widespread, systemic impacts of hydraulic fracturing on drinking water resources, and did not clearly  
21 describe the system(s) of interest (e.g., groundwater, surface water), the scale of impacts (i.e., local or  
22 regional), nor the definitions of ‘systemic’ and ‘widespread’<sup>11</sup>; and

23 WHEREAS, Many communities who were financial beneficiaries of the shale gas extraction “boom” are  
24 now experiencing the environmental damage created by hydraulic fracturing as gas drilling has ceased  
25 due to lower oil prices; and

26 WHEREAS, after careful consideration and using the precautionary principle, the States of New York,  
27 Maryland<sup>12</sup>, and Vermont<sup>13</sup> have enacted bans or moratoriums on fracking; therefore, be it

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<sup>6</sup> <http://www.pnas.org/content/108/20/8172.full.pdf>

<sup>7</sup> <http://www.delawariverkeeper.org/delaware-river>

<sup>8</sup> <http://www.nrel.gov/docs/fy16osti/62820.pdf>

<sup>9</sup> <https://thinkprogress.org/methane-leaks-erase-climate-benefit-of-fracked-gas-countless-studies-find-8b060b2b395d#.16w2lti84>

<sup>10</sup> <http://ehp.niehs.nih.gov/wp-content/uploads/123/1/ehp.1307732.t002.html>

<sup>11</sup> [https://yosemite.epa.gov/sab/sabproduct.nsf/LookupWebReportsLastMonthBOARD/BB6910FEC10C01A18525800C00647104/\\$File/EPA-SAB-16-005+Unsigned.pdf](https://yosemite.epa.gov/sab/sabproduct.nsf/LookupWebReportsLastMonthBOARD/BB6910FEC10C01A18525800C00647104/$File/EPA-SAB-16-005+Unsigned.pdf)

<sup>12</sup> <http://www.greenpeace.org/usa/where-fracking-was-banned-this-year/>

<sup>13</sup> <http://www.cnn.com/2012/05/17/us/vermont-fracking/>

1 **RESOLVED, That the Pennsylvania Medical Society urge and support a moratorium on new natural gas**  
2 **extraction using high-volume hydraulic fracturing in Pennsylvania; and be it further**

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4 **RESOLVED, That the Pennsylvania Medical Society urge the ~~state legislature~~ Commonwealth of**  
5 **Pennsylvania to fund an independent health registry and commission research studies on the health**  
6 **effects of fracking.**

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8 **Fiscal Note: \$2000**

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10 Relevance to Strategic Plan

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