

AUTOMOBILES

H-30.945 Drivers Impaired by Alcohol

The AMA:

1. acknowledges that all alcohol consumption, even at low levels, has a negative impact on driver skills, perceptions, abilities, and performance and poses significant health and safety risks. The AMA will be involved in efforts to educate physicians, the public, and policy makers about this issue and urges national, state, and local medical associations and societies, together with public health, transportation safety, insurance industry, and alcohol beverage industry professionals to renew and strengthen their commitment to preventing alcohol-impaired driving;
2. encourages physicians to participate in educating the public about the hazards of chemically impaired driving;
3. urges public education messages that now use the phrase "drunk driving," or make reference to the amount one might drink without fear of arrest, be replaced with messages that indicate that "all alcohol use, even at low levels, impairs driving performance and poses significant health and safety risks;"
4. urges all states to pass legislation mandating all drivers convicted of first and multiple DUI offenses be screened for alcoholism and provided with referral and treatment when indicated;
5. further recommends the following measures be taken to reduce repeat DUI offenses:
 - a. Aggressive measures be applied to first-time DUI offenders (e.g., license suspension and administrative license revocation),
 - b. Stronger penalties be leveled against repeat offenders, including second-time offenders,
 - c. Such legal sanctions must be linked, for all offenders, to substance abuse assessment and treatment services, to prevent future deaths in alcohol-related crashes and multiple DUI offenses,
 - d. The AMA calls upon the states to coordinate law enforcement, court system, and motor vehicle departments to implement forceful and swift penalties for second-time DUI convictions to send the message that those who drink and drive might receive a second chance but not a third; and
6. encourages the National Highway Traffic Safety Administration to investigate the feasibility of technologies that would prevent an automobile from being started or driven by an individual with an excessive blood alcohol level. (CSA Rep. 14, A-97)

BLOOD ALCOHOL LEVEL

H-30.973 Encouraging State Action to Prevent Drunk Driving

The AMA:

1. encourages state medical societies to urge their state legislators to adopt a blood alcohol level of 0.05 percent [policy H-30.986, modified in 1997 calls for 0.04 percent] as per se illegal for driving; and
2. supports working with Congress to make federal highway funds to states contingent upon state adoption of a blood alcohol level of 0.05 percent as per se illegal for driving. (Res. 1, I-89)

H-30.975 Regulating the Availability of Alcoholic Beverages

The AMA supports the development of model state legislation that would reduce the availability of alcoholic beverages by eliminating their sale at gasoline retailers. (Sub. Res. 142, A-89)

H-30.978 Warning on Drinking and Driving

The AMA supports continued warnings against the irresponsible use of alcohol and challenges the liquor, beer, and wine trade groups to include in their advertising specific warnings against driving after drinking. (Sub. Res. 62, I-87)

H-30.966 Posting Of DUI Laws Where Alcohol Is Sold

It is the policy of the AMA to draft model legislation requiring state motor vehicle licensing bureaus and any store, restaurant or bar that sells alcohol to post local DUI penalties. (Res. 288, A-90)

UNDERAGE DRINKING AND DRIVING

H-30.968 Driver's License Revocation For Underage DWI

The AMA supports legislation mandating the revocation of a driver's license when the driver is found to be driving while intoxicated and is underage for purchasing alcohol. (Res. 230, A-90)

H-170.970 Teenage Drinking and Driving

The AMA supports and encourages programs in elementary, middle, and secondary schools, which provide information on the dangers of driving while under the influence of alcohol, and which emphasize that teenagers who drive should drink no alcoholic beverages whatsoever; and will work with private and civic groups such as Mothers Against Drunk Driving (MADD) to achieve the goals and intent of this resolution. (Sub. Res. 407, A-95)

H-30.959 Mandatory Loss of Driver's License for Drivers Under Age 21 with Any Blood Alcohol Level

The AMA:

1. supports the development of model legislation which would provide for school education programs to teach adolescents about the dangers of drinking and driving and which would mandate the following penalties when a driver under age 21 drives with any blood alcohol level (except for minimal blood alcohol levels, such as less than .02 percent, only from medications or religious practices):
 - a. for the first offense – mandatory revocation of the driver's license for one year and
 - b. for the second offense – mandatory revocation of the driver's license for two years or until age 21, whichever is greater;
2. urges state medical associations to seek enactment of the legislation in their legislatures; and
3. encourages state medical associations to participate in educational activities related to eliminating alcohol use by adolescents.
(Amended BOT Rep. T, A-91)

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H-30.989 Nationwide Legal Drinking Age of 21 Years

The AMA:

1. encourages each state medical society to seek and support legislation to raise the minimum legal drinking age to 21; and
2. urges all physicians to educate their patients about the dangers of alcohol abuse and operating a motor vehicle while under the influence of alcohol. (Sub. Res. 95, A-83; Reaffirmed: CLRPD Rep. I-93-1)