2017 WSNA RESOLUTION # 2

Controlling Rising Costs and Assuring Affordability of Prescription Drugs

WHEREAS, nine in 10 Americans use prescription drugs, and three in four Americans say drug prices are unreasonable; and

WHEREAS, 37% of the average Social Security check goes toward out-of-pocket health care costs, much of which is due to growing costs of prescription drugs, and

WHEREAS, Prescription drugs are the single fastest-growing component of employer-sponsored insurance, accounting for 17 percent of total healthcare spending in 2016, and

WHEREAS, Americans pay the highest price for prescription drugs in the world, resulting in nearly 1 in 5 U.S. residents—35 million people—not filling a prescription each year because they cannot afford it, and

WHEREAS, drug makers, often under the ownership of hedge funds and private equity firms, routinely increase prices for certain drugs without improving the therapeutic value to patients. (Among the 25 prescription drugs with the largest price increases from 2013 and 2015, hedge funds and private equity firms had significant investments in 20 of them over the same period), and

WHEREAS, rising prices for prescription drugs combined with an increase on patient cost-sharing—copays, coinsurance and deductibles—decreases the likelihood of adherence, resulting in worse health outcomes for patients and wasteful spending; and

WHEREAS, in 2015, five of the largest drug corporations made more than $50 BILLION in profits by manipulating the drug market to artificially inflate the cost of generic drugs and by reformulating and re-branding existing drugs resulting unprecedented increase in the costs of drugs, and

WHEREAS, while the Medicare Modernization Act of 2003 prohibits the federal government from negotiating drug prices, the government uses its bulk purchasing power to benefit veterans and Medicaid recipients; and

WHEREAS, provisions in trade agreements often increase administrative costs, enable greater political and economic influence by pharmaceutical companies to intervene in government decision-making involving drug pricing and reimbursements, thereby limiting state and local government authority to address public health:

BE IT THEREFORE,

RESOLVED, that in collaboration with ANA and AFT, WSNA will support and promote both national and state legislative and policy solutions to ensure that high prescription drug prices do not impose barriers to patients’ ability to access needed care, and that prices reflect the clinical value to the patient and not the market power of drug makers; and
RESOLVED, that WSNA will encourage ANA and AFT to support Federal Legislation such as
the recently introduced, “Improving Access to Affordable Prescription Drugs Act” that would:

- Allow Medicare to negotiate fair drug prices and accelerate the closing of the Part D “donut hole.”
- Allow residents and pharmacies to import safe, affordable drugs from Canada, and eventually other select countries.
- Require drug corporations to disclose financial information including profits and pricing information.
- Increase competition of generic drugs and incentivize innovation among drug corporations.

Sponsors:
Professional Nursing & Health Care Council
WSNA Board of Directors

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