Whereas, physician assistants are a valuable member of the physician-led team;

Whereas, physician assistants complete a 26-month physician assistant programs followed by 2,000 hours of clinical rotations, which emphasize primary care in ambulatory clinics, physician offices and acute or long-term care facilities;

Whereas after finishing a rigorous undergraduate academic curriculum, physicians receive an additional four years of education in medical school, followed by 3 – 7 years of residency and 12,000-16,000 hours of patient care training;

Whereas, there are substantial differences in the education of physician assistants and physicians, both in depth of knowledge and length of training;

Whereas, new health care models, including accountable care organizations, require increased teamwork among physicians, nurse practitioners, physician assistants, and other providers of care;

Whereas, efforts to disassemble the physician-physician assistant relationship would further compartmentalize the delivery of health care;

Whereas, the American Academy of PAs (AAPA) House of Delegates approved the “Optimal Team Practice” policy, which supports the removal of state laws requiring a formal supervisory relationship between physicians and physician assistants; establishment of autonomous state licensing boards with a majority of PAs as voting members or for PAs to be full voting members of medical boards; and ensures that physician assistants are eligible to be reimbursed directly by public and private insurance.

Whereas, according to four nationwide surveys, 84% of respondents prefer a physician to have primary responsibility for diagnosing and managing their health care and 91% of respondents said that a physician’s years of medical education and training are vital to optimal patient care, especially in the event of a complication or medical emergency;

Whereas, as physicians, our number one priority is the health and welfare of our patients; and be it

RESOLVED, that the STATE MEDICAL SOCIETY/ASSOCIATION oppose efforts authorizing the independent practice of physician assistants.