

AMERICAN MEDICAL ASSOCIATION HOUSE OF DELEGATES

Resolution: 925
(I-11)

Introduced by: Idaho Delegation

Subject: Physicians in Recovery Programs Applying for Board Certification or
Recertification

Referred to: Reference Committee K
(D. Robert McCaffree, MD, Chair)

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- 1 Whereas, Physicians who participate in the Idaho Medical Association Physician Recovery
2 Network (PRN) program undergo a minimum of 90 days in-patient treatment and sign a
3 monitoring contract for at least five years with PRN; and
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- 5 Whereas, Participants are closely monitored, drug tested, and are usually required to participate
6 in group counseling sessions; and
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- 8 Whereas, As long as these physicians stay in compliance with their PRN contract, they retain
9 their Idaho medical license, can continue to actively practice medicine, can retain their privileges
10 at hospitals, and can continue to participate with health insurance companies; and
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- 12 Whereas, This system helps physicians maintain their practices while in recovery, reduces
13 disruption of patient care, and increases access to physician care in a state that suffers from a
14 chronic lack of physicians; and
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- 16 Whereas, Some of the specialty boards that comprise the American Board of Medical
17 Specialties (ABMS) have adopted a policy whereby if a physician is in a recovery program such
18 as the PRN, that physician cannot sit for his or her boards or test for maintenance of
19 certification, but the ABMS itself does not prohibit such physicians from sitting for boards or
20 maintenance of certification; and
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- 22 Whereas, The policy of these specialty boards can make continuation of a physician's practice
23 impossible as many physician participation contracts from health insurers require board
24 certification and many hospitals also require board certification for medical staff membership;
25 and
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- 27 Whereas, This punitive policy will negatively impact patient access to care in Idaho, which is a
28 rural, underserved state that has always had an inadequate supply of physicians, and will, in
29 addition, perhaps make physicians less likely to come forward and voluntarily join the PRN
30 program, which could result in driving the problem of physician addiction underground; and
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- 32 Whereas, Similar problems are occurring around the country; and
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- 34 Whereas, The AMA opposes the practice of physicians being denied the opportunity to sit for
35 board certification or recertification solely because they are under the supervision of a medical
36 licensing board rehabilitation program; therefore be it

ADOPTED AS AMENDED AND POLICY H-275.949 AMENDED

1 RESOLVED, That our American Medical Association reaffirm its policy, with respect to
2 physicians who are enrolled in and compliant with recovery programs such as the Idaho Medical
3 Association Physician Recovery Network and who have no restrictions on their medical licenses
4 other than requirements for participation in a recovery program, that these physicians be
5 permitted to sit for boards and/or undergo maintenance of certification (Reaffirm HOD Policy);
6 and be it further
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8 RESOLVED, That our AMA communicate Policy H275.949 to all specialty boards and request
9 that they reconsider their policy of exclusion where such a policy exists. (Directive to Take
10 Action)

Fiscal Note: Minimal - less than \$1,000.

Received: 9/20/11

RELEVANT AMA POLICY

H-275.949 Discrimination Against Physicians Under Supervision of Their Medical Examining Board - The AMA opposes the exclusion of otherwise capable physicians from employment, business opportunity, insurance coverage, specialty board certification or recertification, and other benefits, solely because the physician is either presently, or has been in the past, under the supervision of a medical licensing board in a program of rehabilitation or enrolled in a state-wide physician health program. (Sub. Res. 3, A-92; Reaffirmed: BOT Rep. 18, I-93; Reaffirmed: CME Rep. 2, A-05)