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August 10, 2022

Jack Resneck, Jr., M.D., President
American Medical Association
Third and Fourth Floors
1701 Divisadero Street
San Francisco, CA 94115

Dear Dr. Resneck:

A threat to the practice of medicine in America has come to the attention of our three medical organizations. The World Medical Association (WMA) is considering a proposal that, if approved, would prohibit true conscientious objection by physicians by requiring that the objecting physician make an “effective referral.” This is not only unacceptable to our organizations, but is a direct contradiction of AMA policy.

The AMA is the designated representative for the United States in the WMA’s decision-making. We expect that the AMA will not waver from its established policies relating to conscience protection, as outlined particularly in Section 1.1.2 of the AMA Code of Medical Ethics and Physician Right to Conscience H-405.958. These policies do not require “effective referral.”

Representatives of our organizations and several others will be attending the WMA meeting in Washington, D.C., later this week in opposition to the proposal in question. The AMA’s consistency with its own policies as voiced by its representatives will be critically important to this discussion. Please ensure that the AMA representatives clearly present existing AMA policy.

Thank you for your prompt attention to this concern, and we look forward to sharing opposition to this proposal with the AMA.

Jeffrey J. Barrows, D.O., M.A.
Senior Vice President of Bioethics And Public Policy
Christian Medical & Dental Association

Craig Treptow, M.D.
President
Catholic Medical Association

Yehuda Mond, M.D.

Executive Committee Chair
Coalition for Jewish Values Healthcare Council

Cc: Heidi Stensmyren, M.D., President, WMA
David Barbe, M.D., Immediate Past President, WMA

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