RESOLUTION 423 – TOXICITY OF COMPUTERS AND ELECTRONICS WASTE

RECOMMENDATION A:

Mr. Speaker, your Reference Committee recommends that the first resolve of Resolution 423 be amended by insertion on page 1, line 36 to read as follows:

RESOLVED, That our American Medical Association encourage its members and US health institutions to adopt purchasing or leasing contracts only with electronics manufacturers and distributors who are committed to safely handling the products at the end of life, meaning that they reuse and recycle to the greatest extent possible, do not export hazardous electronic waste to developing countries and safely dispose of the waste that can not be reused or recycled (New HOD Policy); and be it further

RECOMMENDATION B:

Mr. Speaker, your Reference Committee recommends that the third resolve of Resolution 423 be amended by insertion on page 2, line 7 to read as follows:

RESOLVED, That our AMA support policies that hold electronics manufacturers and distributors responsible for taking back their products at the end of life, with the objective of redesigning their products for longevity and reduction of harmful materials. (New HOD Policy)

RECOMMENDATION C:

Mr. Speaker, your Reference Committee recommends that Resolution 423 be adopted as amended.

HOD ACTION: Resolution 423 adopted as amended.
Resolution 423 asks our AMA to encourage its members and US health institutions to (1) adopt purchasing/leasing contracts only with electronics manufacturers who are committed to safely handling the products at the end of life (meaning that they reuse and recycle to the greatest extent possible, do not export hazardous electronics waste to developing countries, and safely dispose of the waste that can not be reused or recycled); (2) provide purchasing/leasing preferences to electronics manufacturers who minimize the use of toxic and hazardous constituents and use recycled content and design products that can be recycled easily to minimize adverse public health impacts from electronics waste; and (3) support policies holding electronics manufacturers responsible for taking back their products at the end of life, with the objective of redesigning products for longevity and reduction of harmful materials.

Testimony focused on the leadership role that organized medicine can play with respect to the increasingly problematic disposal of electronics waste. The speed with which electronic devices can become obsolete is seemingly increasing, and the improper disposal of these devices poses a public health threat as heavy metals and other harmful materials enter the environment. One speaker noted that oftentimes the distributor of these devices simply assembles products from a number of different companies, suggesting that both manufacturers and distributors may have a role to play in reducing this waste stream. For that reason, your Reference Committee has suggested amendments to the first and third resolves.