**WISCONSIN PUBLIC HEALTH ASSOCIATION RESOLUTION**

**Title: Support State-wide Ban on Sale of Home-use Mercury Thermometers**

Whereas human exposure to mercury can result in long-term health effects and;

Whereas mercury poisoning has been linked to nervous system, kidney and liver damage and impaired childhood development and;

Whereas mercury related nervous system complications include impaired vision, speech, hearing and coordination and;

Whereas the amount of mercury in one thermometer has the potential to contaminate a ten acre lake and;

Whereas non-mercury thermometers are readily and economically available and;

Whereas a common source of residential contamination is broken home-use thermometers and;

Whereas improper disposal of broken thermometers in municipal waste streams and landfills contaminates large volumes of non-mercury waste and hence the environment and;

Whereas such disposal places at risk those who work in the waste disposal and landfill industries and:

Whereas alternative products currently exist that are safe for humans and not hazardous to the environment and;

Whereas local communities in Wisconsin, including the City of Madison, Dane County and the City of Racine have banned the sale of mercury thermometers within their respective communities and;

Whereas retail outlets have abided by such bans with little or no resistance and;

Whereas many national pharmacy and retail chains have stopped selling mercury thermometers

**Therefore be it resolved** that the Wisconsin State Legislature should draft and pass legislation that a ban on the sale of home-use medical mercury thermometers be instituted state-wide.

**Now be it further resolved** that the Wisconsin Public Health Association (WPHA), through its Public Affairs Committee, contact appropriate members of the Wisconsin Assembly and Senate asking that such legislation be introduced in the next legislative session.

**Now be it further resolved** that WPHA support such legislation by providing appropriate testimony at hearings and promoting an active campaign by encouraging members to contact their local state representatives.

**Now be it further resolved** that WPHA support such a campaign by providing sample letters, telephone scripts for contacting legislators and mercury hazard reference materials.

**Fiscal Impact:** The estimated dollar cost to WPHA for materials, postage and telephone expense is less than $200.

**Probable impact on public health:** Banning the sale of home-use mercury thermometers will reduce the risk of human exposure to mercury in the most intimate environment, the home. Such a ban will reduce mercury exposure to waste collection and landfill workers. Banning the sale of home-use mercury thermometers will help to reduce the volume of mercury released into the environment. Such a ban is an important community education effort, making citizens more aware of the hazards of mercury in the environment. Finally the ban supports the basis premise of health care- "First, do no harm."

**References:**

1. Mercury Source Sector Assessment for the Racine and Kenosha Service Areas- report- September 1998.
2. Mercury- A Curriculum Package for High Schools- Steve Skavroneck, Al Stenstrup- 1998.
3. "City Bans Mercury Thermometer Sales in Landmark Measure". Duluth News-Tribune, March 7, 2000.
4. Ordinance No.28844. City of Madison, Wisconsin.
5. Ordinance No. AMDT4. 2000-2001. Dane County, Wisconsin.
6. Ordinance No 9-01. City of Racine, Wisconsin

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Reviewed by: Resolutions committee

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