

WMA RESOLUTION ON THE INDEPENDENCE OF NATIONAL MEDICAL ASSOCIATIONS

Adopted as a Council Resolution by the 189th WMA Council Session, Montevideo, Uruguay, October 2011, adopted by the 62nd WMA General Assembly, Montevideo, Uruguay, October 2011 and reaffirmed by the 217th WMA Council Session, Seoul (online), April 2021

National medical associations are established to act as representatives of their physicians, and to negotiate on their behalf, sometimes as a trade union or regulatory body but also as a professional association, representing the expertise of medical doctors in relation to matters of public health and wellbeing.

They represent the views of the medical profession, including attempting to ensure the practice of ethical medicine, the provision of good quality medical care, and the adherence to high standards by all practitioners.

These associations may also campaign or advocate on behalf of their members, often in the field of public health. Such advocacy is not always welcomed by governments who may consider the advocacy to have oppositional politics attached, when in reality it is based upon an understanding of the medical evidence and the needs of patients and populations.

The WMA is aware that because of those advocacy efforts some governments attempt to silence the medical association by placing its own nominated representatives into positions of authority, to subvert the message into one they are better able to tolerate.

The WMA denounces such action and demands that no government interferes with the independent functioning of national medical associations. It encourages governments to understand better the reasons behind the work of their national medical association, to consider the medical evidence and to work with physicians to improve the health and wellbeing of their populations.