Implicit Bias

WHEREAS The American Academy of Family Physicians (AAFP) recognizes that “health is a basic human right” and

WHEREAS, the AAFP opposes racial and other forms of discrimination against patients, and

WHEREAS, implicit bias is defined as the attitudes or stereotypes that affect our understanding, actions, and decisions in an unconscious manner, and

WHEREAS, these biases encompasses both favorable and unfavorable assessments and are activated involuntarily which has been linked as a cause of poor health outcomes, and

WHEREAS, there is existing evidence linking racial disparities to maternal and infant mortality, and

WHEREAS, it is the AAFP policy for all family physicians to provide culturally proficient health care and infuse multicultural perspectives into initiatives and recruit and retain diverse individuals, to prepare the workforce to work with diverse individuals, and

WHEREAS, implicit biases create differential health care service offerings and delivery and affect the effectiveness of care provided, including lack of cultural competence, and

WHEREAS, for example, African American women are more likely to give birth to low-birthweight infants, and their newborns experience higher infant death rates that are not associated with any biological differences, even after accounting for socioeconomic factors and

WHEREAS, clinicians can reduce the impact of implicit bias through training and organizational support, and

WHEREAS, the Accreditation Council for Graduate Medical Education program requirements include a resident’s ability to “communicate effectively with patients, families, and the public, as appropriate, across a broad range of socioeconomic and cultural backgrounds,” and
WHEREAS, the AAFP has created the Center for Diversity and Health Equity and subsequently the EveryONE Project which aims to address social determinants of health by providing AAFP members with education and information about health equity, now, therefore, be it

RESOLVED, That the American Academy of Family Physicians create a policy statement defining implicit bias and recognizing its impact on disparities of care, and be it further

RESOLVED, That the American Academy of Family Physicians encourage the Review Committee of Family Medicine (RC-FM) of the Accreditation Council for Graduate Medical Education to include implicit bias trainings within residency education core curriculum, and be it further

RESOLVED, That the American Academy of Family Physicians create continuing medical education opportunities around implicit bias, and be it further

RESOLVED, That the American Academy of Family Physicians encourage research on the effects of implicit bias on patient outcomes and how education around this topic can have measurable and positive effects on population health and individual practice.