

Resolution 112-03: MERCURY IN FOOD AS A HUMAN HEALTH HAZARD

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Endorsed by: California Medical Association

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1 **WHEREAS**, methylmercury is a well-documented toxic substance
2 that has posed a problem wherever it has been encountered, and
3 because of its toxicity, no controlled trials using human subjects have
4 been carried out; and
5
6 **WHEREAS**, a recent study of over 200 patients at risk for mercury
7 exposure, published in *Environmental Health Perspectives*
8 (National Institutes of Health, November 1, 2002, titled “Mercury
9 Levels in High-End Consumers of Fish”), revealed symptoms
10 indicative of mercury exposure, and many patients have incurred
11 significant health bills in pursuit of finding a cause of their symptoms; and
12
13 **WHEREAS**, the patients in this study population ate fish that are under
14 FDA jurisdiction, and no patient ate fish out of San Francisco Bay
15 or non-commercial waterways (in other words, these were people from
16 various walks of life with no unusual occupational exposure); and
17
18 **WHEREAS**, in the study, women of reproductive age and pregnant
19 women were found to have levels considered unsafe for the developing
20 fetus; some patients, including children, were within the current FDA
21 guidelines for fish consumption but were in excess of the current EPA
22 and National Academy of Sciences guidelines for mercury; the majority
23 of the study patients had mercury levels that can increase their risk of
24 myocardial infarction and cardiovascular death according to recent studies
25 as published in the American Heart Association Journal, *Circulation*,
26 and recent reports in the *New England Journal of Medicine*; therefore be it
27
28 **RESOLVED:** That testing of mercury content in fish be continued by
29 appropriate agencies, and laboratory reporting of results of mercury testing
30 be updated and consistent with current EPA and National Academy of
31 Sciences standards; and be it further
32
33 **RESOLVED:** That the results and advisories of any mercury testing of fish
34 should be readily available where fish are sold, including labeling of
35 packaged/canned fish; and be it further

- 1 **RESOLVED:** That CMA encourage physicians to educate their patients
- 2 about the dangers of mercury toxicity in food items, especially fish, and to
- 3 advise pregnant women to limit their consumption of fish and parents to
- 4 limit their children's consumption of fish; and be it further
- 5
- 6 **RESOLVED:** That this matter be referred for national action.