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7 **VERMONT MEDICAL SOCIETY RESOLUTION**

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9 **Stem Cell Clinics**

10 *As adopted at the VMS Annual Meeting on November 2, 2019*

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13 WHEREAS, the only US Food and Drug Administration (FDA)-approved stem cell therapies are those
14 involving one specific type of stem cell (hematopoietic stem cells) to treat certain cancers, including
15 leukemias and lymphomas and aplastic anemia; any stem cell uses beyond this are not FDA-approved;
16 and

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18 WHEREAS, in recent years, there has been a burgeoning of “stem cell clinics” in the United States and
19 internationally, which offer various “stem cell treatments” that are not scientifically proven and not
20 regulated by the US Food and Drug Administration (FDA) - there were two clinics nationwide in 2009,
21 today there are more than 700 including multiple located in Vermont;^{i ii} and

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23 WHEREAS, these clinics aim to escape FDA-regulation by using a patient’s own cells that are
24 “minimally manipulated” and claim to use stem cells from one’s own body fat, bone marrow, and blood,
25 although some use cells from amniotic fluid, placental tissue, umbilical cord tissue, and even unknown
26 sources of cells from other donors, however it is unknown whether the cells used in such treatments are
27 actually stem cells;ⁱⁱⁱ and

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29 WHEREAS, these clinics tend to engage in aggressive and false marketing to the public, with promises
30 that stem cell treatments can improve cosmetic appearance as well as help a variety of conditions
31 ranging from arthritis to autism, COPD, neuropathy and chronic pain;^{iv v} and

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33 WHEREAS, Unproven stem cell therapies can be unsafe: reported adverse events include blindness due
34 to injections of stem cells into the eye and spinal cord injections that caused the growth of a spinal
35 tumor; other potential safety concerns for unproven treatments include administration site reactions,
36 the ability of cells to move from placement sites and change into inappropriate cell types or multiply,
37 and the growth of tumors;^{vi} and

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39 WHEREAS, the FDA and Federal Trade Commission are taking steps to strengthen their oversight
40 and enforcement actions regarding stem cell therapies and the FDA is currently developing guidelines
41 to more strictly regulate these clinics;^{vii viii} and

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43 WHEREAS, physicians and other clinicians may be unaware of the information being promoted to
44 patients from stem cell centers and may even refer patients to such clinics; therefore be it

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46 **RESOLVED, that the Vermont Medical Society disseminate evidence-based information to its**
47 **members regarding stem cell clinics and therapies and encourage members to have evidence-**
48 **based discussions with their patients when they inquire about such services; and be it further**
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50 **RESOLVED, that VMS coordinate with appropriate professional licensing boards, the Attorney**
51 **General’s Office and other regulatory bodies to ensure that patients seeking stem cell therapies**
52 **are provided safe and evidence-based information and services.**

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- i <https://khn.org/news/elite-hospitals-plunge-into-unproven-stem-cell-treatments/>
- ii <https://www.sevendaysvt.com/vermont/exploring-the-science-and-the-snake-oil-behind-regenerative-stem-cell-therapy/Content?oid=22786601>
- iii <https://www.nytimes.com/2019/05/13/health/stem-cells-fda.html>
- iv Jin J. Stem Cell Treatments. *JAMA*. 2017;317(3):330. doi:10.1001/jama.2016.17822, available at <https://jamanetwork.com/journals/jama/fullarticle/2598269>
- v <https://www.consumerreports.org/medical-treatments-procedures/trouble-with-stem-cell-therapy/>
- vi <https://www.fda.gov/consumers/consumer-updates/fda-warns-about-stem-cell-therapies>
- vii <https://khn.org/news/elite-hospitals-plunge-into-unproven-stem-cell-treatments/>
- viii <https://www.fda.gov/news-events/press-announcements/statement-stem-cell-clinic-permanent-injunction-and-fdas-ongoing-efforts-protect-patients-risks>