



American Medical Women's Association

The Vision and Voice of Women in Medicine since 1915

American Medical Women's Association
Position Paper on Gender Discrimination & Sexual Harassment

Gender Discrimination & Sexual Harassment

The American Medical Women's Association is an organization of women physicians and medical students which values equality for women and equal opportunity for women to achieve their full professional and personal potential. AMWA maintains as primary organizational objectives: the promotion of education and training of women physicians, the encouragement of women to study and practice medicine, and the assurance of equal opportunity for women to study and practice medicine. Sexual harassment and gender discrimination fundamentally preclude these key objectives via multiple routes. Examples are:

- Interference with the quality of learning.
- Interference with both quality of the practice of medicine and the performance of other professional activities.
- Negative impact on morale.
- Interference with opportunities for promotion and career development.
- Negative impact on women's physical and psychological well-being.
- Negative impact on patient care and doctor/patient relationships.
- Interference with opportunities to assume leadership positions within medicine.

In light of these considerations, the American Medical Women's Association has adopted the position to oppose all forms of sexual harassment and gender discrimination against women in medical academia, organizations, hospitals, clinics, private practices, publishing endeavors, and any other professional activities.

Gender discrimination shall be defined as any behaviors, actions, or policies which adversely affect women due to disparate treatment, disparate impact, or the creation of a hostile or intimidating work or learning environment. Sexual harassment, a form of gender discrimination, shall be defined as unwelcomed sexual advances, requests for sexual favors, or other verbal or physical conduct of a sexual nature when: 1.) submission to such conduct is made either explicitly or implicitly a term or condition of an individual's training or professional position, 2.) submission to or rejection of such conduct by an individual is used as a basis for professional decisions affecting such individual, or 3.) such conduct has the purpose or effect of unreasonably interfering with an individual's work/learning performance or creating an intimidating, hostile or offensive work environment. Examples of behavior that the American

Medical Women's Association may consider as gender discrimination or sexual harassment include, but are not limited to, the following:

- Any verbal sexual advance or touching that is deemed by the recipient to be unwelcome.
- Sexually oriented comments about the body, appearance or lifestyle of a woman.
- Offensive non-verbal behavior such as leering or staring which is deemed by the recipient to be unwelcome.
- Showing or displaying sexually explicit graphics, cartoons, pictures, photographs, or objects in the school or workplace.
- Statements or threats which imply a link or could be reasonably construed to imply a link between a woman's sexual conduct and her work/training status, advancement potential, salary treatment, or other action affecting her professional status or development.

- Unequal pay for women's medical training, research, academic, administrative, practice, or organizational activities.
- Unequal or limited access to important mentor relationships.
- Unequal or limited access to faculty appointments, promotions, and tenure.
- Diminished recognition for clinical work or research due to gender.
- Failure to recognize authorship or original material.
- Punitive behaviors, actions, or limitations in opportunities for training and career advancement due to pregnancy or parenting status.
- Failure to establish reasonable parental leave policies that allow at least thirteen weeks leave of absence without jeopardy to job security or rank.

The American Medical Women's Association will support medical institutions, organizations, and individuals who:

- * Actively monitor the status of women and maintain equity in salary and promotions.
- * Provide flexible residencies or job opportunities that provide for parenting status.
- * Maintain reasonable parental leaves that protect job status and rank as indicated above.
- * Have established discrimination and sexual harassment policies and complaint procedures that specify reporting procedures that are protective of the complainant's privacy, that provide security against retaliation, and that result in effective punishment of offenders.

AMWA is committed to the opposition of gender discrimination through, but not limited to:

- Educational workshops that enhance the understanding of discrimination and its prevention.
- Publication of articles in JAMWA relevant to the identification, prevention, and resolution of gender discrimination.
- Resource packets that assist women in preventing, recognizing and dealing with discrimination.
- A Gender Equity Subcommittee to monitor the impact of and recommend organizational responses.
- Networking of women professionals and organizations active in preventing discrimination.
- Support of legislators and bills, which promote gender equity.
- Provision of resource material to women encountering discrimination.

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