

## Position Paper on Gender Equity

The Gender Equity Task Force (GETF) of the American Medical Women's Association (AMWA) holds the position that gender equity must be the standard in every sphere of the medical establishment, as well as American society. All conduct that deviates from this standard, at every level of power and influence, is inherently unethical and unlawful, and cannot be tolerated or excused.

Laws give women the right to gender equity, to be free from discrimination on the basis of gender in all areas of their lives. The Universal Declaration of Human Rights (UDHR) gives women, in equality with men, the inalienable right to be free from discrimination on the basis of gender (Article 2). Women pursuing the profession of medicine, in all its forms and at every stage of progress, have these rights throughout their lifespan. Women have the right, as do men, to redress their grievances when their rights as individual human persons are violated. That is de jure. (ref. Laws below)

De facto is different. Women who know their right to gender equity, and try to exercise their rights, to correct wrongs done to them and protest violations of their rights, are commonly subject to retaliation. Retaliation ranges from damning with faint praise, untrue and unfair evaluation, diagnoses that discredit, disparagement, exclusion, disadvantage, de facto discrimination, blacklisting, character assassination, firing, loss of livelihood, and loss of profession, through to include, tragically, loss of life. All of the women who suffer such retaliation are directly harmed by this unethical conduct, often indelibly for a lifetime. This is inexcusable and unjustifiable. Retaliatory conduct is repugnant, unethical and unlawful. Therefore, these practices, and the policies that enable them, must stop, and serious negative consequences be created for those who choose to retaliate and do harm.

A hostile work environment impedes the optimum development of human potential. AMWA holds the position that there must be zero tolerance of gender stereotyping, gendered harassment, disparities in compensation, disparities in access to career development resources, the creation of a hostile work or learning environment.

Ultimately all conduct that deviates from true gender equity harmfully impacts the care given by both women and men physicians.

It is the position of AMWA that it is the duty of all persons in the medical establishment of America, in every position and functional capacity, to ensure gender equity is a living reality for all women and men.

### References:

Universal Declaration of Human Rights (UDHR)  
Civil Rights Act, Title VII  
Equal Employment Opportunity Act

An Overview of Women in Academic Medicine, AAMC Analysis Vol. 6, Number 7  
Policy on Creating a Gender Neutral Workplace

Respectfully Submitted:

Joyce Braak MD

Linda Brodsky MD

Roberta Gebhard DO

Ryan Smith MS3

Vanessa Coleman MS1

September 2010