

**Mississippi Nurses Association**  
**Resolution to Oppose Initiative #26 on the November Ballot**

*Approved October, 20, 2011*

WHEREAS, it has come before the Mississippi Nurses Association Board of Directors medically-related concerns regarding Initiative #26 that will appear on the ballot in the November election, and

WHEREAS, the following language will appear on the ballot: “From the website of Mississippi Secretary of State Delbert Hosemann: Initiative 26 "Be it Enacted by the People of the State of Mississippi: SECTION 1. Article III of the constitution of the state of Mississippi is hereby amended BY THE ADDITION OF A NEW SECTION TO READ: SECTION 33. Person defined. As used in this Article III of the state constitution, "The term 'person' or 'persons' shall include every human being from the moment of fertilization, cloning or the functional equivalent thereof.", and

WHEREAS, the Board of Trustees of the Mississippi State Medical Association voted NOT to support Initiative #26 stating, “We fear that it will place in jeopardy a physician who tries to save a mother's life by performing procedures and employing techniques physicians have used for years. The common procedures we use now could be interpreted as murder or wrongful death if Proposal 26 passes. This justifiably will limit the physician's options and deter use of common lifesaving procedures. It is for this reason only, the MSMA Board of Trustees cannot support Initiative #26.”; and

WHEREAS, the American Society of Reproductive Medicine is opposed to Initiative #26 stating, “Amendment 26 not only threatens the reproductive rights of women, it also thwarts the ability of those who suffer from infertility to seek treatment appropriate for their disease. It would unduly restrict an infertile patient’s right to make decisions about embryos created as part of the in vitro fertilization process.”; and

WHEREAS, the Mississippi Chapter of the American Congress of Obstetricians and Gynecologists is opposed to Initiative #26 stating, “We unanimously agree that Initiative #26 is BAD for Mississippi. It has numerous unintended consequences that will affect the care of our patients. We further believe it will have a profound negative effect on our patient relationships for years to come. We hope you will vote NO on initiative #26”; and

WHEREAS, many of the MNA members work in areas where this amendment may affect their practice, and,

WHEREAS, If Initiative 26 passes, many forms of commonly used birth control pills could become illegal. Most birth control pills contain a combination of the hormones estrogen and progesterin. These pills prevent unintended pregnancies primarily by suppressing ovulation, but in theory could also prevent fertilization and implantation. Since Initiative 26 would designate a fertilized egg as a person—even before implantation in the uterus - birth control pills could be banned on the basis that they impact a “person.”; and

WHEREAS, Initiative 26 has no exception for pregnancies that put the life of the mother in danger. Some pregnancies, if carried to term, pose life threatening dangers to the mother. Initiative 26 makes no exception for these tragic cases, forcing women to risk their lives or leave the state to seek medical care.

WHEREAS, Catholic Bishop Joseph Latino has issued the following statement, “while Personhood Mississippi is a noble initiative, as Bishop, I join with Catholic Bishops in several other states in not endorsing these Personhood petitions to be circulated in our Catholic parishes. We have committed ourselves to working for a federal amendment and feel the push for a state amendment could ultimately harm our efforts to overthrow Roe vs. Wade”, and

WHEREAS, Initiative #26 could hold women and doctors criminally responsible for common medical practices. In-vitro specialists could be investigated if one of the embryos is damaged, and

WHEREAS, registered nurses who work in any of those medical settings including in vitro fertilization, labor and delivery, midwifery, primary care, etc. could be affected by this initiative.

THEREFORE LET IT BE RESOLVED, that the Mississippi Nurses Association’s House of Delegates join our colleagues in medicine to oppose and not support Initiative #26 because of its dangerous consequences for women, and many health care providers.