RESOLUTION

Subject: Promoting Online Safety Literacy in Kentucky Public Schools

Submitted by: Greater Louisville Medical Society

Referred to: Reference Committee

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WHEREAS, children and adolescents in Kentucky are increasingly exposed to online risks, such as cyberbullying, grooming, sextortion, and misinformation, as digital platforms become a central part of their daily lives; and

WHEREAS, the National Center for Missing & Exploited Children (NCMEC) and the U.S. Federal Bureau of Investigation (FBI) report that more than 80% of child victims of online exploitation are between the ages of 8 and 17[1,2]; and

WHEREAS, Kentucky currently does not have a mandated statewide curriculum for online safety literacy, despite having a voluntary digital citizenship course that is optional to students across school districts[6]; and

WHEREAS, the state's last major legislative update on internet education was in 1998 (Senate Bill 230), which mandated internet filtering but did not address the rise of social media, cyber exploitation, or modern digital communication platforms[5]; and

WHEREAS, organizations such as the American Academy of Pediatrics, Cybersecurity and Infrastructure Security Agency (CISA), and the U.S. Department of Education recommend early and age-appropriate digital literacy education to help protect children from online harm[3,4]; now, therefore, be it

RESOLVED, that KMA advocate for the implementation of mandatory, age-appropriate online safety and digital literacy curriculum in all public schools in Kentucky, beginning in elementary school and continuing through high school; and be it further

RESOLVED, that KMA support updating the state education policy to include policies on digital privacy, cyberbullying prevention, recognizing online grooming and misinformation, and respectful digital communication; and be it further

RESOLVED, that KMA encourage collaboration among educators and the state education board, healthcare professionals, and cybersecurity experts to develop an evidence-based curriculum using the current digital citizenship course as a framework to be updated according to national guidelines.

References:

1. National Center for Missing & Exploited Children (NCMEC) – https://www.missingkids.org
2. FBI Public Safety Alert on Sextortion (2022) – https://www.fbi.gov/news/press-releases/press-releases/fbi-issues-warning-on-sextortion-schemes
3. American Academy of Pediatrics (AAP) – Media Use in School-Age Children and Adolescents (2016) - https://publications.aap.org/pediatrics/article/138/5/e20162592/60321/Media-Use-in-School-Aged-Children-and-Adolescents
4. Cybersecurity & Infrastructure Security Agency (CISA) – https://www.cisa.gov
5. Kentucky Senate Bill 230 (1998) – https://www.education.ky.gov/districts/tech/pages/senate-bill.aspx
6. Kentucky Department of Education – Digital Citizenship Guidance – https://www.education.ky.gov/school/diglrn/digcitizen/Pages/default.aspx