

**ANTIBIOTIC RESISTANCE AWARENESS**  
*(Adopted by Convention Delegates April 2001)*  
*Reviewed by Board of Managers March 2012*

- WHEREAS,** The PTA believes that sound health is vital to the welfare of children and youth, the community, and the nation; and
- WHEREAS,** Medical experts are in agreement that an increasing number of bacteria such as staphylococcus, streptococcus and mycobacterium that cause bacterial infectious diseases such as tuberculosis, gonorrhea, pneumonia, meningitis, and even simple ear infections have developed strains that are resistant to many of the common antibiotics previously used to fight these bacterial infectious diseases, and that overuse and inappropriate use of antibiotics has hastened this development; and
- WHEREAS,** National and international organizations such as the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention and the World Health Organization, and prestigious medical journals such as The New England Journal of Medicine have published reports documenting the increase of antibiotic resistance; and
- WHEREAS,** The National Foundation for Infectious Diseases has ranked antibiotic resistance and emerging infections as the first among the top ten problems in infectious diseases on which it will concentrate its efforts; and
- WHEREAS,** The problem of antibiotic resistance is global and poses an increasingly urgent threat to public health, which is of particular concern in children because of frequent use of antibiotics in the outpatient setting for the treatment of common childhood diseases; now therefore be it
- RESOLVED,** That the California State PTA and its units, councils and districts work with public health authorities, the medical community, and health care providers to educate parents and community members concerning antibiotic resistance, its causes, and the steps they can take to reduce and inhibit its spread; and be it further
- RESOLVED,** That the California State PTA submit this resolution to National PTA for consideration at its 2002 convention.

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## BACKGROUND SUMMARY

Antibiotics in the 21<sup>st</sup> century are increasingly compromised in their ability to conquer diseases and infections that even 10 years ago were easily controlled. The spread of antibiotic resistance has become one of the most critical emerging infectious disease threats in this country, according to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC). There is a real threat that unless something drastic is done, certain bacteria may emerge that cannot be treated at all.

Each year more than 133 million prescriptions for antibiotics are written to non-hospitalized patients; 190 million doses a day are administered in hospitals. According to the CDC, up to 50% of antibiotic use may be inappropriate. The inappropriate use is for viral infections against which antibiotics are ineffective. In addition, appropriately prescribed antibiotics are in many cases taken improperly.

Reducing the inappropriate use of antibiotics is part of an effective strategy to slow antibiotic resistance. Habits which lead to inappropriate antibiotic use include:

- insisting on an antibiotic when the physician says no;
- not taking a prescribed antibiotic for the full course of treatment;
- using antibiotics without a doctor's care or using leftover antibiotics; and
- using antibiotics prescribed to others.

The California State PTA, together with the California Medical Association Foundation, the California Department of Health Services and representatives of health plans, the pharmaceutical industry and consumer groups have initiated a five-year project to reduce the unnecessary use of antibiotics and reduce the prevalence of antibiotic resistant bacteria in California. The drugs available today can be used knowledgeably to cure the bacterial infections of today. However, unless a more serious effort to educate parents and caretakers about the proper use of antibiotics is undertaken, bacteria resistant to antibiotics will increasingly threaten to send the world back to a pre-antibiotic age.