

SCOLIOSIS SCREENING

Adopted by Convention Delegates May 8, 1980

Reviewed by Board of Managers November 2010

- WHEREAS,** Scoliosis is a condition of lateral or side-to-side curvature of the spine which may develop during a child's growth period, nine through sixteen; and
- WHEREAS,** When the curvature is recognized early in its development, there are methods of correcting the curvature and/or preventing its increase; and
- WHEREAS,** Delay in treating scoliosis may necessitate more major medical treatment, including surgery, to correct the curvature; and
- WHEREAS,** The method of screening for scoliosis is visual inspection of the child by a trained observer, so that screening is simple, painless and cost effective; and
- WHEREAS,** The National PTA encourages screening programs as part of a comprehensive program of health within the educational environment; now therefore be it
- RESOLVED,** That the California State PTA urge its units, councils and districts to work with their respective school districts to establish scoliosis screening programs for all students ages nine through sixteen; and be it further
- RESOLVED,** That the California State PTA assist units, councils and districts in educating parents and the general public about scoliosis and the necessity for early detection and treatment.

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BACKGROUND SUMMARY

The early detection and treatment of scoliosis is the key to preventing later health problems. However, few parents know what to look for and few teenagers make regular visits to their doctor. Screening programs provide an excellent way to detect scoliosis before the curvature reaches a serious degree. Most scoliosis screening programs are conducted in the school by nurses and physical education teachers who are specially trained to spot possible curves of the back. If a possible curve is detected, the student's parents are notified and asked to take their child to see their family physician for an examination. If the doctor confirms a diagnosis of scoliosis, the child is usually referred to a doctor who specializes in scoliosis treatment.

If a growing child with scoliosis is not given the needed medical treatment, the curve may progress to a serious degree, affecting both health and appearance in later life. In most cases, treatment can slow down or stop the curve from increasing, preventing later health problems. Although current forms of treatment cannot produce an absolutely straight or normal spine, individuals given the right treatment can live full, active lives.