TO: MSSNY COUNCIL  
FROM: MSSNY COMMITTEE ON BIOETHICS  
SUBJECT: RECOMMENDATION ON RESOLUTIONS 2015-267 AND 268

Resolutions 2015-267 and Resolution 2015-268 were originally referred to the Reference Committee on Socio-medical Economics at the 2015 House of Delegates. The Reference Committee heard testimony, but in its report to the HOD indicated that it felt that they received insufficient documentation/science to ensure MSSNY’s development of a position regarding complete genomic sequencing at this time and referred this to the MSSNY Council for further study. MSSNY Council in turn referred these two resolutions to MSSNY’s Committee on Bioethics.

Resolution 2015-267 Complete Genomic Sequencing
RESOLVED, That complete genomic sequencing will be offered within the price range in which limited sequencing is being performed now.

Resolution 2015-268 Private Insurance Carriers Become Medicare Franchise Resolution
RESOLVED, That MSSNY will encourage the funding of complete genomic sequencing, encourage an increase in the training of molecular geneticists in order to eventually accelerate the clinical trial process, and identify the genomic sequence variant signatures of unknown significance based on identifiable phenotypic expressions of the participants.

The Committee on Bioethics began discussion of these two resolutions in May 2015, but agreed that they would need to hear from the author of these resolutions. Submitted, by King County Medical Society, the two resolutions were authored by Clarisse Clemons, MD. Dr. Clemons participated in the committee meeting on October 16, 2015 on these resolutions. There were questions about the science underlying these two resolutions.

Resolution 267 and Resolution 268
Dr. Clemons stated that the focus of these resolutions were early detection and ensuring that insurance coverage is provided. Dr. Clemons is looking for protocol that would allow genetic testing to come up in the electronic medical records so physicians know that there is something in the patient’s medical history background that would trigger the need genomic testing and that all adults have genomic testing. Dr. Clemons believes that it would be wise if genetic testing should be “done from cradle to grave” and also indicated that Medicare and other insurance should be required to pay for this testing. Dr. Clemons stated that everyone from childbirth to adulthood should have genomic sequencing. Committee members discussed with Dr. Clemons the potential for benefit vs. potential harm if testing was to occur for everyone. It was stated by one of the committee members that the resolve of Resolution 267 does not state what the author desires; that the resolve deals with price range and does not discuss sequencing. There were also questions about whether there has been cost-effective analysis, assessments of how this testing affects treatment choices, its impact on
Following discussion with Dr. Clemons, the committee discussed both resolutions for possible action. Committee members raised issues of privacy, who will have access to sequencing, the benefit vs. potential harm, and how both these resolutions raises a host of potential ethical issues. Members did agree that further research into the topic is needed, along with consideration of the potential ethical implications of genomic testing, and the financial cost to society. Members also agreed that there needs to be further training of genetic counselors. There was also discussion by as to whether there is currently any clinical indication for complete genomic sequencing would even be ordered by a physician and whether the technology is even available to accomplish this. Therefore,

Resolution 267        Complete Genomic Sequencing
The MSSNY Bioethics Committee recommends that Resolution 267 BE NOT ADOPTED.
(MSSNY COUNCIL ACTION)

Resolution 268        Private Insurance Carriers Become Medicare Franchise Resolution
The MSSNY Bioethics Committee recommends that the FOLLOWING SUBSTITUTE RESOLUTION 268 BE ADOPTED IN LIEU OF RESOLUTION 268:

RESOLVED, that the Medical Society of the State of New York encourage further research into genomic sequencing, including its ethical implications, its clinical implications, and its financial implications; and be it further

RESOLVED, that the Medical Society of the State of New York also encourage efforts to increase the number qualified genetic counselors in anticipation of the increasing clinical need.

Title Change
The Bioethics Committee also recommends that the title of Resolution 268 be changed to read as follows:

Genomic Medicine
(MSSNY COUNCIL ACTION)