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February 28, 2017

The Honorable Steve King
Chairman, House Judiciary Committee
Subcommittee on the Constitution &
Civil Justice
2138 Rayburn Office Building
Washington, DC 20515

Dear Chairman King:

On behalf of the physician and medical student members of the American Medical Association (AMA), I am writing in support of H.R. 1215, the "Protecting Access to Care Act of 2017" (PACA), and commend you for introducing this legislation. This legislation includes significant reforms that will help repair our nation's medical liability system, reduce the growth of health care costs, and preserve patients' access to medical care.

The current system fails both patients and physicians. The cost of our medical liability system is borne by everyone as defensive medicine adds billions of dollars to the cost of health care, translating into higher health care spending and higher health insurance premiums. Studies reveal that physicians are compelled to order more tests and procedures to protect themselves from medical liability lawsuits. Every dollar that goes toward medical liability costs and defensive medicine is a dollar that does not go to patients who need care, nor toward investment in patient safety and quality improvements or health information technology systems.

We believe that the proven reforms contained in H.R. 1215 would greatly improve our medical liability system, while ensuring that patients who have been injured receive just compensation. This bill provides the right balance of reforms by promoting speedier resolutions to disputes, maintaining access to courts, maximizing patient recovery of damage awards with unlimited compensation for economic damages, while limiting non-economic damages to a quarter million dollars. Importantly, H.R. 1215 includes language to protect medical liability reforms at the state level.

Thank you for your commitment to improve our nation's medical liability system. It is time for Congress to enact meaningful medical liability reform legislation to repair the current litigious climate that continues to increase health care costs and compromise patients' access to care.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "James L. Madara". The signature is fluid and cursive, with a large initial "J" and "M".

James L. Madara, MD