



Michael D. Maves, MD, MBA, Executive Vice President, CEO

January 24, 2011

The Honorable Lamar Smith
U.S. House of Representatives
Judiciary Committee
2409 Rayburn House Office Building
Washington, DC 20515

Dear Chairman Smith:

On behalf of the physician and medical student members of the American Medical Association (AMA), I am writing in support of H.R. 5, the "Help Efficient, Accessible, Low-cost, Timely Healthcare (HEALTH) Act of 2011," and commend you for introducing this legislation. The HEALTH Act 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 the HEALTH Act would help resolve the medical liability crisis, 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. In addition, the HEALTH Act protects 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 that reads "Mike Maves". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

Michael D. Maves, MD, MBA