



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

April 21, 2009

The Honorable Orrin Hatch
United States Senate
104 Hart Senate Office Building
Washington, DC 20510

Dear Senator Hatch:

On behalf of the American Medical Association (AMA) and its physician and medical student members, I am writing to express our support for S. 660, the "National Pain Care Policy Act of 2009." Although pain has been a major public health problem in our country for decades and a leading contributor to health care costs, as well as a leading cause of disability, individuals suffering from pain often face significant barriers that can prevent proper assessment, diagnosis, treatment, and management of their pain. The National Pain Care Policy Act would provide a multi-pronged approach to comprehensively address many of these issues.

This legislation would direct much-needed federal efforts and resources to improving pain care research, professional and public education, training, outreach, and patient access to appropriate pain care services. Moreover, S. 660 offers significant potential benefits to physicians practicing in many specialties and to their patients who suffer from a wide range of painful conditions. These provisions provide a blueprint for action to further the goals of the congressionally-declared Decade of Pain Control and Research, which runs through 2010.

The National Pain Care Policy Act will go a long way towards raising awareness of pain as a significant public health problem and making pain care research, education, and treatment important national health care priorities. We are particularly supportive of the provisions in your legislation that highlight disparities in pain care specific to populations that are disproportionately under-treated for pain. The AMA is pleased to support your bill and offers our assistance in helping you as this legislation moves forward in Congress.

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