



## SENT TO THE ILLINOIS CONGRESSIONAL DELEGATION

August 15, 2011

On behalf of the 12,000 member physicians of the Illinois State Medical Society, I want to take this opportunity to remind you of the health care reform principles we believe must be the cornerstone of any fair and balanced health system reform plan.

ISMS acknowledges both the pluses and minuses of the Patient Protection and Affordable Care Act (PPACA) and, in doing so, believes it charts a mixed and unclear path to meaningful health system reform. It is our wish to provide input as PPACA implementation moves forward, toward correcting the law's infirmities and assuring meaningful, sustainable health care access for the patients of Illinois. Some core examples of the PPACA's shortfalls include the lack of Medicare payment reform; the absence of true medical liability reform; the law's dependence on a woefully underfunded Medicaid program to cover those uninsured who cannot afford to purchase insurance; and the broad and arbitrary authority granted to an Independent Payment Advisory Board to establish targets and cut payments without attention to underlying cost drivers or coverages.

ISMS positions on health system reform are clear:

- Replacement of Medicare's flawed Sustainable Growth Rate formula with a fair reimbursement system that adequately covers the expense of providing medical services.
- Health care delivery and finance system reform should use the current public-private system as a basis and focus on incremental change.
- All patients should have access to a health benefit plan that would include catastrophic coverage as well as preventive services, appropriate screening, primary care, immunizations, and prescription drug coverage.
- Health insurance reform is needed to allow public and private plans to develop innovative coverage plans, including the development of health savings accounts and other high deductible plans to encourage patients, physicians and other health care providers to pursue high value care.
- All health care expenditures should receive equal treatment for purposes of tax deduction and tax credits.
- Professional liability reform – including caps on noneconomic damages – should continue to be pursued and defended as a way to reduce direct and indirect costs (defensive medicine) and to address the adverse effect the current medical liability system has on the physician-patient relationship and access to health care.
- Use of information technology in health care delivery should be encouraged to improve quality and safety of care, enhance efficiency and control costs.

- Health care education and literacy must be an important part of any medical care financing and delivery system reform.
- Health care reform proposals should include provisions for physicians to set and negotiate their own fees in order to adequately compensate physicians and other health care providers for the promotion of personal and public health.
- Evidence-based protocols should support, not replace the patient-physician relationship.
- ISMS objects to third party insurance carriers interfering with the practice of medicine and the patient-physician relationship.

As further health care legislation is introduced and the regulatory process advances, we urge you to use these principles as a guideline to improve the PPACA and correct its flaws. If ISMS can provide further information or assistance as the implementation process unfolds, please do not hesitate to contact our division of governmental affairs at 312/580-6443.

Sincerely,

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Chair, Board of Trustees

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