



Sound Policy. Quality Care.

January 6, 2011

The Honorable Phil Gingrey
U.S. House of Representatives
Washington, DC 20510

Subject: Endorsement of the HEALTH Act

Dear Doctor Gingrey,

As the Alliance of Specialty Medicine (Alliance), our mission is to advocate for sound federal health care policy that fosters patient access to the highest quality specialty care and improves timely access to high quality medical care for all Americans. Fixing our nation's broken medical liability system is essential to meeting these goals and as patient and physician advocates, we commend your efforts and are pleased to endorse your bill, the Help Efficient, Accessible, Low-cost, Timely Healthcare (HEALTH) Act.

Since Congress failed to include this critical element of health reform in the Patient Protection and Affordable Care Act, our health care system is still faced with a patchwork system of medical liability laws around the country. This results in increased professional liability insurance premiums, frivolous lawsuits, and higher health care costs system wide. The unpredictability of the current system has led doctors to limit the scope of their practices, move to states that have effective reforms in place, or leave medical practice altogether. Without reform, patients' continued access to timely and necessary medical care remains in jeopardy. The total annual costs of the current system are estimated to be well over \$200 billion, and medical liability reform will also help achieve health system savings by reducing the incentives for defensive medicine. Indeed, the Congressional Budget Office has determined that comprehensive, proven reforms -- such as those included in the HEALTH Act -- will save the federal government over \$54 billion.

Specialty physicians believe it is imperative that Congress pass comprehensive federal medical liability reform legislation and we are hopeful that the 112th Congress will be able to meet this challenge.

Thank you for your ongoing leadership on this issue, and we look forward to working with you on this and other important health policy issues. In the meantime, if you have any questions please contact Katie Orrico at korrico@neurosurgery.org or 202-446-2024. For more information about the Alliance, please e-mail us at info@specialtydocs.org.

Sincerely,

American Academy of Facial Plastic and Reconstructive Surgery
American Association of Neurological Surgeons
American Association of Orthopaedic Surgeons
American Gastroenterological Association
American Society of Cataract & Refractive Surgery
American Urological Association
Coalition of State Rheumatology Organizations
Congress of Neurological Surgeons
Heart Rhythm Society
National Association of Spine Specialists
Society for Cardiovascular Angiography and Interventions

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