



**A Coalition of 14 Medical Societies Representing
more than 200,000 Specialty Physicians in the United States**

John D. Barnes, Chair
jbarnes@aad.org
(202) 842-3555

Gordon Wheeler, Vice-Chair
gwheeler@acep.org
(202) 728-0610

February 12, 2004

The Honorable Judd Gregg
United States Senate
Washington, DC 20510

Dear Senator Gregg,

The Alliance of Specialty Medicine, a coalition of 14 medical societies representing more than 200,000 specialty physicians in the United States, thanks you for your strong commitment to pass meaningful medical liability reform in this Congress. We deeply appreciate your attempts to vote on medical liability in 2003, and were disappointed that efforts to consider liability legislation were blocked last July.

Last year, the Alliance endorsed several medical liability reform bills (including H.R. 5, the HEALTH Act, and its Senate counterparts, S. 607 and S. 11, the Patients First Act) that contain needed reforms, including a \$250,000 cap on non-economic damages. If enacted, any one of these bills would ensure that all physicians receive relief from the currently broken medical litigation system.

We also understand, however, that the Senate faces unique challenges in passing comprehensive legislation, and for this reason the undersigned members of the Alliance are fully behind the current Senate strategy to hold a series of votes on medical liability reform targeted towards obstetric care, emergency department and trauma care services, rural and volunteer physicians. The Alliance is therefore pleased to support S. 2061, the Healthy Mothers and Healthy Babies Access to Care Act.

While America's medical liability crisis does not affect just one specialty or one type of patient, we strongly believe that every attempt must be taken to pass legislation and raise public awareness of this crisis. The Alliance is fully committed to focus the Nation's attention on the need to solve this crisis, and to work with you to identify a successful strategy that will help get a bill signed into law. Congress must pass, and the President must sign, legislation that will solve the crisis for all physicians and patients. The House has done its part. It is now time for the Senate to act to prevent a further deepening of this crisis.

We applaud your continued attempts to highlight the crisis, and look forward to working closely with you again this year to preserve the doctor-patient relationship, and keep good doctors doing good work on behalf of their patients.

For further information, please contact the Co-Chairs of the Medical Liability Workgroup for the Alliance, Kathy Pontzer at pontzer@aaos.org or (202) 546-4430 or Katie Orrico at korrico@neurosurgery.org or (202) 628-2072.

Sincerely,

American Academy of Dermatology Association
American Association of Neurological Surgeons
American Association of Orthopaedic Surgeons
American College of Cardiology
American College of Emergency Physicians
American College of Radiology
American Gastroenterological Association
American College of Obstetricians and Gynecologists
American Society of Cataract and Refractive Surgery
American Urological Association
Congress of Neurological Surgeons
National Association of Spine Specialists
Society of Thoracic Surgeons