



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

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January 27, 2004

The Honorable Bill Frist
Majority Leader
United States Senate
Washington, DC 20510

Dear Dr. Frist,

The undersigned members of the Alliance of Specialty Medicine, a coalition of 14 medical societies representing more than 200,000 specialty physicians in the United States, thank 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.

Many of the most highly affected specialties are represented within the Alliance, and all specialties know too well the impact this crisis has upon our patients. Doctors are leaving states with unstable medical liability systems, limiting their services, or giving up their practices altogether, seriously impeding patient access to care.

The Alliance strongly supports legislation introduced by Senators Gregg and Ensign, and supported by Republican Leadership, that contain needed reforms, including a \$250,000 cap on non-economic damages. This legislation would ensure that all physicians receive relief. We also understand that the Senate faces unique challenges to passing legislation. For this reason, the Alliance strongly supports efforts by the Senate to consider an incremental approach to medical liability reform, including votes on reform targeted towards obstetric care, emergency department and trauma care services, rural and volunteer physicians.

We recognize that America's medical liability crisis does not affect just one specialty or one type of patient. But 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 Association of Neurological Surgeons
American Association of Orthopaedic Surgeons
American College of Emergency Physicians
American Gastroenterological Association
American College of Obstetricians and Gynecologists
American Society of Cataract and Refractive Surgery
Congress of Neurological Surgeons
National Association of Spine Specialists

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