



NEWS RELEASE

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AOA Echo's Presidents Call for Comprehensive Health Care Reforms

All comments can be attributed to Larry A. Wickless, DO, President of the American Osteopathic Association (AOA)

(Washington, DC) – Tonight President Barack Obama addressed a joint session of Congress, calling on Congress and the nation to join together in a bipartisan manner to pass meaningful and comprehensive health care reform. The American Osteopathic Association (AOA), and the 67,000 osteopathic physicians it represents, applauds the commitment of the President and the bipartisan Members of Congress who are working to advance reforms that will improve our nation's health care system. Ensuring that every American has access to affordable health coverage is a goal that has our full support.

The need for health care reform is recognized and understood by each of us; how we achieve our joint goals remains the focus of the current debate. The President and Congress recognize that the task at hand is a difficult one. Reforming the health care system is a task that numerous Presidents and Congresses have attempted to accomplish. Past efforts have resulted in significant incremental changes that have improved the health and well-being of millions of people. Unfortunately, these previous attempts have not prevented our system from reaching its current state.

The current health care system is fragmented and fails to meet the needs of patients, even those that have health care coverage. The current system lacks continuity and has grown cumbersome for physicians who dedicate their careers to providing care to their patients. We are concerned that the escalating cost of our current system has grown unsustainable and the costs of health care coverage have a detrimental impact upon individuals, businesses and our nation.

We are pleased that the President and Congress have focused their attention on not only improving access to affordable health coverage, but also the creation of a health care system that places a greater focus on primary care, prevention and wellness, and encouraging all individuals to seek and establish a long-term relationship with a physician. Specifically, we are pleased that the President indicated the need to address the current medical liability system and his commitment to taking immediate administrative actions to advance policies that reduce the negative impact of medical liability on our health care system. The AOA has long advocated for such reforms as a means of increasing access to physician services and decreasing the cost of health care. While we continue to believe that more robust medical liability reforms are necessary, we applaud the President's willingness to include such reforms in the current debate.

The AOA has advanced five goals for health care reform:

- Ensure Access to Affordable Health Coverage for All Americans
- Reform the Delivery System – Begin with Long-Term Reforms of Physician Payment Methodologies
- Create an Equitable Health Care Financing Infrastructure – Including Medical Liability Reforms

- Promote Individual Investments in Health Through Prevention, Wellness, and Public Health
- Grow the Physician Workforce to Meet Demand - Promote Primary Care and General Surgery

The AOA is pleased that Congress and the President have dedicated extensive time and resources to advancing reforms that will improve the lives of the patients served by our members. We look forward to continuing our work with the House, Senate, and President Obama to advance policies that meet our shared goals of improving our nation's ailing health care system.

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The American Osteopathic Association proudly represents more than 67,000 osteopathic physicians (D.O.s) practicing in 31 specialties and subspecialties, promotes public health, encourages scientific research, serves as the primary certifying body for D.O.s and is the accrediting agency for all osteopathic medical schools and health care facilities. More information on D.O.s/osteopathic medicine can be found at www.osteopathic.org.