



FloridaMedical

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Helping Physicians Practice Medicine

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November 18, 2009

J. James Rohack, M.D., President
Cecil B. Wilson, M.D., President-Elect
American Medical Association
515 N. State Street
Chicago, IL 60610

Dear Dr. Rohack and Dr. Wilson:

Last week I reported to the members of the Florida Medical Association (FMA) that the House of Delegates of the American Medical Association (AMA) adopted Substitute Resolution 203: Health System Reform Legislation during the 2009 AMA Interim Meeting in Houston. As you know, Substitute Resolution 203 provides policies that the AMA Board of Trustees must follow as the AMA works with Congress to achieve the best health system reform legislation possible for physicians and their patients.

The Chair of our Florida Delegation to the AMA, E. Coy Irvin, M.D., also reported to our FMA members that the Florida Delegation worked tirelessly with the Southeastern Delegation and other delegations from across the country to advance the concerns of our colleagues in Florida, to make sure their voices were heard in Reference Committee B: Legislative Advocacy and on the floor of the House of Delegates. The fourteen resolves contained in Substitute Resolution 203 detail AMA policy on health system reform that the AMA is committed to achieve in working with Congress, the Administration, and other stakeholders. These resolves include:

- seven critical components of AMA policy
- elimination of denials for pre-existing conditions
- the promotion by AMA leadership of AMA policies for health system reform
- the support of health system reform alternatives that are consistent with AMA policies concerning pluralism, freedom of choice, freedom of practice, and universal access for patients
- AMA policy for insurance coverage options offered in a health insurance exchange
- the right of patients and physicians to privately contract
- opposition to the Independent Medicare Commission
- six important provisions requiring the AMA to actively and publicly oppose reduced payments to physicians under Medicare and oppose related restrictions on physicians
- requiring the AMA to continue to actively engage grassroots physicians and physicians in training in collaboration with state medical and national specialty societies to contact their members of Congress to communicate the AMA's position based on AMA policy
- that the AMA use the most effective media event or campaign to outline what physicians and patients need from health system reform
- that national health system reform must include replacing the sustainable growth rate (SGR) with a payment system that keeps pace with the cost of running a practice and is backed by a fair, stable funding formula, with a "call to action" for the Federation to advance this goal

J. James Rohack, M.D., President
Cecil B. Wilson, M.D., President-Elect
November 18, 2009
Page 2

- that creation of a new single payer, government-run health care system is not in the best interest of the country and must not be part of national health system reform
- that effective medical liability reform that will significantly lower health care costs by reducing defensive medicine and eliminating unnecessary litigation from the system should be part of any national health system reform
- reaffirmation of AMA policy H-460.909 Comparative Effectiveness Research, which provides principles as official AMA policy for creating a centralized comparative effectiveness research entity

The members of Reference Committee B performed an outstanding service in considering the eight resolutions related to health system reform, including Resolution 209: Health Care Reform Legislation, co-sponsored by the Florida Delegation with other state and national specialty society delegations, and Resolution 219: Health System Reform sponsored by the Florida Delegation. Our Florida Delegation's sponsorship of these resolutions was directed by the FMA Board of Governors. Many of the AMA policies that were adopted in Substitute Resolution 203 emanated from these resolutions and other testimony that members of the Florida Delegation and our colleagues from around the country provided in Reference Committee B and on the floor of the AMA House of Delegates.

The FMA and our Florida Delegation to the AMA are pleased that Substitute Resolution 203 contains many of the provisions that were originally submitted in resolutions the FMA sponsored or co-sponsored and from our efforts with other delegations. Accordingly, we look forward to hearing from the AMA on your progress with the implementation of Substitute Resolution 203. The FMA also welcomes the opportunity of working closely with the AMA and with our Florida Congressional Delegation to assure that the provisions of Substitute Resolution 203 are incorporated in any health system reform legislation under consideration by Congress and will guide the AMA in its decision to endorse or not endorse the legislation.

Sincerely,



James B. Dolan, M.D.
President, Florida Medical Association

cc: AMA Board of Trustees
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