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PIAA Applauds Creation of Congressional Civil Justice Caucus

Rockville, MD – February 10, 2011 – The Physician Insurers Association of America (PIAA), a national association representing healthcare provider-owned and/or -operated medical professional liability insurance companies, today announced its support for the newly created bipartisan Congressional Civil Justice Caucus.

The PIAA commended Representatives Bob Goodlatte (R-VA) and Dan Boren (D-OK), the founding co-chairs, for their work in forming the caucus.

“The efforts of these two leaders, and all the founding members of the caucus, demonstrate the strong bipartisan support for reforming elements of our civil justice system,” stated PIAA President Lawrence E. Smarr. “The recent bipartisan introduction of H.R. 5, which will bring needed reforms to our medical liability system, and President Obama’s own remarks about medical liability reform in his State of the Union address, highlight the growing awareness in Washington that our civil justice system is in need of repair.”

“It is unfortunate that this caucus is even necessary in the first place,” continued Smarr. “We should all want a legal system that brings effective and efficient justice to Americans. Regrettably, the personal injury bar, which has blocked most efforts to bring about needed reforms, continues to advocate for a status quo which allows for too many meritless lawsuits and diverts resources needed to compensate legitimate victims into the pockets of the lawyers who developed and operate our faulty tort system.”

“We hope the Congressional Civil Justice Caucus will be able to shed additional light on the serious flaws in our civil liability system and focus even more attention on the need for reform. The data clearly show that, while more than 70% of all medical liability claims result in no payment to the plaintiff, the few that are meritorious take on average four years to resolve, and half of the money available to pay claims is consumed by the tort system, mostly to pay lawyers. The PIAA stands ready to support the caucus and its efforts to educate lawmakers on ways to make the system work for everyone.”

The PIAA is a national association of healthcare provider-owned and/or -operated medical liability insurance companies, which insure more than 60 percent of America’s private practicing physicians as well as dentists, hospitals, and other healthcare practitioners.

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