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PIAA Praises U.S. House of Representatives for Passing H.R. 5

Rockville, MD – March 22, 2012 – The Physician Insurers Association of America (PIAA), the national insurance industry trade association representing medical professional liability (MPL) insurance companies, today praised the U.S. House of Representatives for its passage of comprehensive medical professional liability reform legislation. In a bipartisan effort, the House voted 223-181 to approve the legislation.

The bill, H.R. 5, contains proven, effective reforms that include sensible limits on arbitrary non-economic damages, a structured schedule for attorney fees, periodic payment of future damages, and a reasonable statute of limitations.

The chamber also approved an amendment by Cong. Cliff Stearns (R-FL) and Jim Matheson (D-UT) to protect medical volunteers serving in federally-declared disaster areas from lawsuits. The amendment passed by a 251-157 vote.

“The House of Representatives took bold and much needed action today to repair our broken medical liability system,” said Brian K. Atchinson, president and CEO of the PIAA. “These congressional leaders understand that a system which discourages full communication between doctors and patients, and continues to promote meritless lawsuits, does not serve anyone’s best interests. Inclusion of the Stearns/Matheson amendment in the final bill was also a significant step forward in recognizing the duty we have to ensure that those who are most in need of care have access to it.”

“Comprehensive medical liability reform at the federal level is necessary to reduce costs, increase access to care, and ensure that the system works for both patients and healthcare providers alike,” Atchinson continued. “The PIAA and its members stand committed to the physicians and other healthcare providers we insure, and to the patients they serve. As such, we will continue to work for enactment of effective, comprehensive medical professional liability reform legislation.”

The PIAA is the national insurance trade association representing medical liability insurance companies. PIAA members insure more than 60 percent of America’s private practicing physicians as well as dentists, hospitals, and other healthcare practitioners.

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