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Medical
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MAG JOINS NATIONAL COALITION THAT'S FOCUSED ON PRESERVING PRACTICE OF MEDICINE AND PATIENT-PHYSICIAN RELATIONSHIP

ATLANTA – Faced with federal legislation that will undermine the world's best medical care, the Medical Association of Georgia (MAG) has joined the Coalition of State Medical and National Specialty Societies to preserve the practice of medicine and the patient-physician relationship, according to MAG President Gary C. Richter, M.D. The coalition has 11 charter members that represent more than 70,000 physicians, numbers Dr. Richter expects to grow.

In terms of critical action, Dr. Richter says the coalition is calling on every American patient and physician to contact members of the U.S. House of Representatives to urge them to oppose the Senate version of the health bill that they'll consider in the coming days because it lays the foundation for government-controlled health care. What's more, he says the coalition sent a March 4 letter to congressional leaders asking them to repeal the Sustainable Growth Rate (SGR) – which serves as the basis for Medicare payment for physicians – because of the disastrous effects it's having on patient access to care.

Dr. Richter reports that the coalition believes, "We shouldn't be talking about an expanded role for government in health care when the government programs we have are unsustainable. We are convinced that the majority of practicing physicians in this country believe the key to reforming our health care system is reforming the medical payment system, which is a message we've been advocating on behalf of our patients for more than a year."

In terms of solutions, Dr. Richter says the coalition's mission is based on three core principles, including...

- The right to privately contract without third party interference or penalty. The coalition refers to this as a "touchstone of American freedom and liberty."
- The determination of the quality of medical care must be made by the profession of medicine – not by the government or other third party payers.
- Medical liability reform that's based on proven policies is an essential part of any health care reform. The coalition believes this will ensure that all patients have access to quality, affordable health care.

The coalition includes the Medical Association of the State of Alabama, the Medical Society of the District of Columbia, the Medical Association of Georgia, the Florida Medical Association, the Kansas Medical Society, the Medical Society of New Jersey, the South Carolina Medical Association, the American Academy of Facial Plastic and Reconstructive Surgery, the American Association of Neurological Surgeons, the American Society of General Surgeons, and the Congress of Neurological Surgeons.

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