

1849 The Exchange  
Suite 200  
Atlanta, GA 30339  
678.303.9290  
800.282.0224  
Fax 678.303.3732  
www.mag.org



Medical  
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Contact Tom Kornegay at 678.303.9260 or [tkornegay@mag.org](mailto:tkornegay@mag.org)

### **MAG IN GROUP REPRESENTING 92,000 DOCTORS OPPOSING SENATE HEALTH BILL**

ATLANTA – The Medical Association of Georgia (MAG) is part of a group of state and national specialty medical societies that represents more than 92,000 practicing physicians from across the U.S. that sent a letter to U.S. Senators today urging them to oppose the “Patient Protection and Affordable Care Act” (H.R. 3590) because it clears the way for government-controlled medical care.

MAG President Gary C. Richter, M.D., says, “We believe that this bill would create a staggering volume of new federal regulatory requirements for medicine, that it isn’t sustainable from a budget standpoint, that a ‘public’ or ‘community’ health insurance option may lead to a single-payer system, that the measure lacks meaningful tort reform and actually discourages proven reforms like limiting attorney fees and malpractice caps, and that the bill does not fix the Medicare Sustainable Growth Rate, or SGR, formula.”

In the letter, the physician groups ask Senate leaders to “draft a more targeted bill that will reform the country’s flawed system for financing health care, while preserving the best health care in the world.” The letter states, “We are therefore united in our resolve to achieve health system reform that empowers patients and preserves the practice of medicine – without creating a huge government bureaucracy.”

The letter also highlights some of the bill’s more “problematic provisions,” stressing that it undermines the patient-physician relationship. The correspondence points out that the bill does not provide for the right to privately contract – a “touchstone of American freedom and liberty” – and it stresses that “patients should have the right to choose their doctor and enter into agreements for fees and services without penalty.” The letter urges lawmakers to develop legislation that “allows patients and physicians to take a more direct role in their health care decisions,” and it points out that decisions surrounding medical care isn’t an appropriate role for the government or other third party payers.

Along with MAG, signatories include the Medical Association of the State of Alabama, the Medical Society of Delaware, the Medical Society of the District of Columbia, the Florida Medical Association, the Kansas Medical Society, the Louisiana State Medical Society, the Missouri State Medical Association, the Nebraska Medical Association, the Medical Society of New Jersey, the Medical Society of South Carolina, the American Academy of Cosmetic Surgery, the American Academy of Facial Plastic and Reconstructive Surgery, the American Association of Neurological Surgeons, the American Society of Breast Surgeons, the American Society of General Surgeons, and the Congress of Neurological Surgeons. Three past presidents of the American Medical Association – Donald J. Palmisano, M.D., William G. Plested III, M.D., and Daniel H. Johnson Jr., M.D. – also signed the letter.

The letter has been posted at [www.mag.org/nationalhealthcarereform](http://www.mag.org/nationalhealthcarereform).

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