

Moving Medicine Forward in North Carolina

Peter W. Carmel

To the Editor—As the nation's largest physician organization, the American Medical Association (AMA) is uniquely positioned to help physicians thrive in medical practice during all stages of their careers. The AMA is the only organization in the United States that represents all physicians across all specialties in every state and is the physicians' voice as lawmakers work on issues critical to the future of medicine. In North Carolina, the AMA is proud to support and work alongside the North Carolina Medical Society on a variety of issues important to physicians, including medical liability reform. The AMA is pleased to have contributed to a big win for North Carolina physicians in 2011, as Governor Beverly Purdue's veto of medical liability reform legislation was successfully overridden.

While the AMA continues to pursue medical liability reform at the federal level, liability reforms at the state level are essential to ensuring that physicians can do what they do best—care for patients. The AMA Advocacy Resource Center works closely with state medical associations to support legislative efforts in their respective states, and the AMA Litigation Center collaborates with state medical associations to assist them when the liability battle shifts to the courts. In North Carolina, the AMA contributed \$100,000 to the North Carolina Medical Society's successful liability reform marketing efforts in 2011 to help fix the broken medical liability system for both patients and physicians.

The AMA is working with the North Carolina Medical Society on other issues, as well. North Carolina has faced steep Medicare payment cuts every year since 2002 because of the failed Medicare payment formula for physicians, and each year the AMA has been able to secure congressional action to prevent these cuts. Most recently, at the urging

of the AMA and its partners in the Federation of Medicine, Congress passed legislation to provide stable Medicare payments for all of 2011. This legislation is worth an average of \$29,000 to each North Carolina physician.

The AMA also offers North Carolina physicians the opportunity to participate in webinars and seminars on topics that affect their daily practice of medicine, such as how physicians can succeed with new payment models such as medical homes and accountable care organizations. Physicians can also take advantage of resources designed to help them adopt health information technology and qualify for federal incentives, like the free resource *A Clinician's Guide to Electronic Prescribing*. The AMA will continue to provide resources and support to help physicians in North Carolina help their patients.

As the voice of American medicine, the AMA will continue to work with all states and specialties to advocate for policies that will help physicians thrive as we move medicine forward together. Together, we truly are stronger. NCMJ

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