



**SDSMA Health Reform Update  
July 22, 2009**

Dear Colleague:

The health system reform debate in Washington, D.C., is moving at a frantic pace.

The most recent development that affects South Dakota State Medical Association (SDSMA) members occurred last week, when the American Medical Association (AMA) announced its support of HR 3200, "America's Affordable Health Choices Act of 2009." The bill includes provisions key to comprehensive health reform, including:

- Coverage to all Americans through health insurance market reforms;
- A choice of plans through a health insurance exchange;
- An end to coverage denials based on pre-existing conditions;
- Fundamental Medicare reform, including repeal of the flawed sustainable growth rate (SGR) formula;
- Additional funding for primary care services, without reductions on specialty care;
- Individual responsibility for health insurance, including premium assistance to those who need it;
- Prevention and wellness initiatives to help keep Americans healthy; and
- Initiatives to address physician workforce concerns.

[Please click here](#) for more information on HR 3200.

While there are many positives in HR 3200, there are some elements of the legislation that we do not support – particularly provisions to create a public plan option that would be linked to Medicare reimbursement and a mandate for companies, including small businesses, to provide health insurance for their employees.

As advocates for patients and physicians of South Dakota, the SDSMA believes in:

- The role of physicians in the determination of health care policy;
- A health care system that provides the greatest possible access to basic quality health care that is affordable for all South Dakota citizens;
- A health care system that makes available affordable plans for catastrophic health care coverage to avoid financial ruin of individuals and families;
- A health care delivery system that meets the highest standards of care for acute and chronic disease states while addressing disease prevention, wellness and public health;
- The ethical imperative of providing health care to individuals, responsible stewardship of community resources, and the importance of personal health responsibility;
- Cost management by all stakeholders – patients, providers, and payers – to ensure a workable, affordable and sustainable health care system;
- The development of a health care system that can provide effective, efficient, and appropriate health care without administrative barriers and unreasonable overhead costs;
- A shared public/private effort to provide access to and financing for appropriate health services and a system which will allow individuals/employers to purchase additional services or insurance;

- Sufficient government funding for public health and other essential medical services to include, disaster medicine and trauma care; and
- Comprehensive medical liability reform to ensure access to quality health care.

We continue to monitor this legislation and other health reform bills currently in Congress, as legislation can and does change dramatically in the legislative process. In order to keep up on the latest proposals and to ensure the voices of our membership are being heard, the SDSMA has established a Health System Reform Task Force. The task force, which is comprised of members of the SDSMA Committee on Legislation and the Committee on Medical Practice, is meeting regularly to discuss the latest developments and to provide guidance for the direction the SDSMA. [Please click here](#) to view a list of committee members.

It's important for your voice to be heard in this crucially important discussion on health system reform. That's why the SDSMA has established a [Health System Reform Web page](#) and a Health System Reform Forum. The Web page is where we're compiling the latest information from Washington, including links to legislation and analysis from the AMA. The Forum is where you can speak out on the latest proposals.

To reach the Forum:

- Visit [www.sdsma.org](http://www.sdsma.org) and log in with your username and password in the box in the upper left-hand corner of the page, under the SDSMA logo.
- Click on "SDSMA Forum" and when the page loads, click on "Login," found in the set of links near the upper right-hand corner of the page between "Search" and "RSS."
- Enter your username and password again.
- On the next page, you'll see a list of forum topics. Click on "SDSMA Health System Reform."
- On the next page, click on "Health System Reform".
- You will see a list of topics. To create a new message under a topic, click on the topic title and start typing under "new post." When you're finished typing, hit "submit." To post a new topic, click on "new topic" on the forum topics page.

If you need technical assistance, if you have misplaced your username/password or need a username/password, please contact Megan Myers at [mmyers@sdsma.org](mailto:mmyers@sdsma.org) or 605.336.1965.

Thanks very much for your membership in the SDSMA and the AMA.



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