
From: Wm. Jeff Terry [mailto:jeffterry@usa.net]

Sent: Sunday, March 14, 2010 9:37 AM

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Subject: Fwd: AMA Response

Dear Colleagues,

I just don't understand. Why do we think we can negotiate something in the reconciliation bill when we were unable to negotiate anything of significance in the original bill? There will be tremendous political pressures that have nothing to do with the patient-physician relationship involved in the reconciliation process and there is no guarantee that "good things" will happen. Are we afraid of making this administration mad? I thought senator Reid had all but guaranteed we would have SGR reform and from what I see it is not going to happen. There are too many senators that understand adding SGR reform will be a \$480 billion dollar swing in the cost of the bill (right now it is a \$240 billion savings) no matter what the President says. Also everyone understands that everything they plan to add in the reconciliation bill will either add more costs or remove more income from the original bill thus making the bottom line go up even further. There are some people that still believe in fiscal responsibility. In my opinion we have a much better chance for appropriate health care reform by defeating this legislation and starting over. I am sorry our leadership does not agree. I think the AMA has a chance to make a difference by speaking out now. I can only assume that our leadership is OK with all of the bad things in the Senate bill because that is what we are going to be stuck with when this bill passes. There are many smart people in politics that say once the Senate bill passes and is signed immediately by the President then he will be on his plane and health care reform will be in the rear view mirror not to be heard from again (for excellent political reasons) until after the November elections.

I understand the pressure you are under, the fact that you are certainly more knowledgeable than I when it comes to politics, and I understand that you are looking at this from all points of view. I

respect your work tremendously and realize that basically I am a surgeon who does not want to compromise my patient's care. Politics is fundamentally one big compromise and that is what I have a problem with when it comes to health care reform. I also talk to my patients every day about the risks and benefits of their decisions. Have you had this discussion? Do the risks of not getting anything in reconciliation concern you? Do you not see the benefits of defeating bad legislation and starting over?

Physicians in Alabama are already speaking with a 36% loss in AMA membership and I know there are other states that are looking at a greater loss. I think this says something about our stance on this legislation because this is the only reason these doctors are not renewing their membership. Our AMA needs to step back and look at the big picture and where we want to be as an organization in the next decade. We are presently going down the road of an organization that will represent only employed and academic physicians because those of us in private practice who have to work 60 - 80 hours a week just to pay overhead will not have the time or money to commit to the AMA political process in the future.

Sincerely,

W. Jeff Terry, MD
Alabama

----- Original Message -----

Received: Sat, 13 Mar 2010 11:02:24 PM CST

From: "Katie O. Orrico" <korrigo@neurosurgery.org>

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Subject: AMA Response

See below response from Dr. Patchin in answer to our letter to the AMA urging them to oppose passage of the Senate health reform bill by the House of Representatives.

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I have received your letter that urges the AMA to immediately and publicly announce opposition to passage of the Patient Protection and Affordable Care Act (H.R. 3590) by the House of Representatives without waiting to analyze legislative language in a reconciliation bill that will alter provisions in the Senate bill.

The views expressed in the attached sign on letter have been respectfully and thoroughly considered by the AMA leadership.

The AMA continues to be engaged in active discussions with the Administration and Congressional leaders on modifications of the Independent Payment Advisory Board as it applies to physician. These efforts go well beyond sending letters staking out a position and involve potential provisions in the reconciliation bill that would benefit physicians and their patients. Issuing a letter of opposition prior to the conclusion of current discussions on the IPAB provisions would foreclose the ability to secure significant policy changes.

The reconciliation legislation will alter the Senate passed bill in a number of ways. With House floor votes on a reconciliation bill not expected before March 19 (and possibly later) there is still time and opportunity for the AMA to forcefully register its views on the final health system reform package. We believe the proper course is to defer a decision on whether to urge Congress to oppose or support passage of the final bill until it is apparent that we are no longer able to secure important modifications and after we have analyzed the legislative language for the reconciliation bill.

Over the next several days the AMA will provide a steady stream of communications on critical decisions with far-reaching consequences for physicians, patients and the nation.

Sincerely

Rebecca J Patchin, MD