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POS SUPPORTS EACHUS HEALTHCARE AMENDMENT
Move Process Forward for Strengthening Healthcare System
While Addressing Some Deficiencies in the Legislation

HARRISBURG (March 12, 2007) – The Pennsylvania Orthopaedic Society (POS) today asked members of the House of Representatives to support an amendment to expand health insurance coverage to uninsured adults and continue a state program, which has assisted doctors with their medical liability insurance premiums, in a letter to representatives. The letter also notifies the lawmakers that certain provisions of the amendment need further review and require modification.

“The Orthopaedic Society remains the leading statewide healthcare organization advocating for an affordable expansion of health insurance coverage for uninsured adults,” said POS President Jon B. Tucker, MD, of Pittsburgh. “At the same time we recognize that any expansion of health insurance coverage will be meaningless without doctors in Pennsylvania to care for patients, so that is why we continue our call for preserving the program which has kept doctors practicing here.”

In the letter, Dr. Tucker stated that POS supports:

1. A 10-year extension of the Mcare Abatement Program;
2. Adoption of a financially sound mechanism to retire the Mcare Fund's liability with state resources; and,
3. A state-funded, voluntary program to provide health care insurance for the Commonwealth's uninsured.

The House is expected to vote on an amendment to Senate Bill 1137, introduced by Rep. Todd Eachus (D-Luzerne) later today. The amendment would continue the Mcare Program and expand the Adult Basic Health Insurance Program to cover more uninsured adults. But further review and more work is needed to determine and refine the impact of specific language on these programs.

“We look forward to working with leaders in the House and the Senate and the Governor's office to resolve these remaining issues so we can guarantee Pennsylvanians access to affordable health insurance and quality specialty medical care,” Dr. Tucker added.

Since last fall, POS has been working with Governor Rendell, legislative leaders and other statewide healthcare organizations to find common ground on proposals to extend the Mcare Abatement Program, retire the Mcare Fund and provide healthcare insurance to Pennsylvania's uninsured citizens.

Enacted in 2003, the Mcare Abatement Program has done more than any other individual measure since 2002 to keep specialty surgeons such as orthopaedic surgeons practicing in Pennsylvania. The program provides 100% abatement for high-risk

specialty surgeons and 50% abatement for all other physicians from the state mandated, state-run excess medical liability insurance coverage.

POS is a professional medical specialty organization representing more than 900 orthopaedic surgeons across Pennsylvania in advocating for excellence in the practice of orthopaedic medicine. For more information on the importance of bone, joint and muscle health at every age, visit the POS website at www.paorthosociety.org.

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