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**POS APPLAUDS SENATE HEALTHCARE PACKAGE**

**HARRISBURG (June 10, 2008)** – The Pennsylvania Orthopaedic Society (POS) today applauded the Senate Republican Caucus for introducing innovative solutions to the state’s healthcare needs and encouraged all four legislative caucuses and the Governor to work together to enact meaningful healthcare reforms before the summer break.

The Senate Majority Caucus today announced HealthNET PA – a package of bills designed to improve access to care and to reduce the cost of healthcare services in Pennsylvania. Led by Sen. Ted Erickson (R-Delaware), the press conference featured remarks by Sens. Jake Corman (R-Centre), Don White (R-Indiana) and Rob Wonderling (R-Montgomery). POS commends the Senate Republican Caucus’s efforts to address the Commonwealth’s healthcare needs.

The 15-bill package contains legislative initiatives designed to improve access to healthcare services and medicine; to make healthcare more affordable; and to expand

healthcare insurance coverage. To fund the various programs, \$100 million would be appropriated annually from the Health Care Provider Retention Account.

“Orthopaedic surgeons across the state applaud these efforts to advance innovative solutions to the Commonwealth’s pressing healthcare needs,” said POS President Jon Tucker, M.D. “This comprehensive and sustainable package can form the basis for further discussions among the four legislative caucuses and the Administration.”

Although not specifically addressed in HealthNET PA, Sen. Erickson and others indicated that the Senate Majority Caucus is supportive of continued Mcare Abatement and retiring the Mcare Fund with state resources. Since November of 2007, the POS has advocated a plan that would continue the Mcare Abatement Program for 10 years and retire the Mcare Fund over that 10 year period through Mcare revenue. POS supports the Mcare provisions contained in SB 1137 PN 1838.

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.

“We encourage the four legislative caucuses and Gov. Rendell to negotiate a compromise on these issues as well as re-authorize the Mcare Abatement Program before the summer break,” said Dr. Tucker. “We stand ready to work with all parties to forge a solution.”

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](http://www.paorthosociety.org).

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