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**POS THANKS SENATOR ERICKSON AND OTHERS FOR REINTRODUCTION
OF HEALTHCARE PACKAGE**

HARRISBURG (February 2, 2009) The Pennsylvania Orthopaedic Society (POS) today thanked Sen. Ted Erickson (R-Delaware) and six others from the Senate Republican Caucus for re-introducing HealthNET PA - a package of bills designed to improve access to care and to reduce the cost of healthcare services in Pennsylvania. POS also encouraged all four legislative caucuses and the Governor to work together to enact meaningful healthcare reforms early in the new legislative session.

“The Senate Republican Caucus is the first out of the gate with the re-introduction of the HealthNET PA proposals,” said POS president Gerald R. Williams Jr., MD. “On behalf of the Commonwealth’s more than 900 orthopaedic surgeons, we thank Senator Erickson, the other senators attending the press conference, and the Senate Republican leaders for making healthcare issues a top prior for their caucus.”

Led by Sen. Ted Erickson (R-Delaware), the press conference featured remarks by Sens. Mike Brubaker (R-Lancaster), Mike Folmer (R-Lebanon), Lisa Baker (R-Luzerne), John Eichelberger (R-Blair) and Pat Vance (R-Cumberland). Sen. Rich Alloway (R-Franklin) also attended the event. 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

Although not specifically addressed in HealthNET PA, Sen. Erickson indicated that the Senate Majority Caucus is supportive of continuing the Mcare Abatement Program. 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.

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 know the House Democrats have also designated healthcare reform as a top priority. House Majority Todd Eachus has reserved House Bill number one for his updated legislation and we anticipate that proposal will be introduced soon. 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 as early in this session as possible,” said Dr. Williams. “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.

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