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TWO ORTHOPAEDIC DOCS TO SERVE ON MCARE COMMISSION

HARRISBURG (March 15, 2006) – Two Orthopaedic doctors will be working to preserve patient access to specialty medical care in Pennsylvania as members of a state commission formed to address the future of the state’s excess medical professional liability insurance fund.

“On behalf of orthopaedic surgeons, I want to thank Senate President Pro Tempore Robert Jubelirer and Senate Minority Leader Robert Mellow for recognizing the importance of preserving patient access to specialty medicine and giving a voice to specialty medicine on this commission,” said The Pennsylvania Orthopaedic Society (POS) President Joshua Port, M.D.

Port and Scranton Orthopaedic Surgeon and POS member Joseph Cesare, M.D. were appointed by Sens. Jubelirer and Mellow respectively, to serve on the 11-member Commission on the Medical Care Availability and Reduction of Error (MCARE) Fund. The Commission is charged with reviewing and recommending appropriate and effective methods to address any future unfunded liabilities of the MCARE Fund.

The MCARE Fund is a state-mandated excess medical professional liability insurance fund and represents nearly half of the medical liability insurance costs incurred

by orthopaedic surgeons. The Fund, which is scheduled to be phased out, carries a growing unfunded liability now estimated at \$2.3 billion.

The other members of the Commission include: Sen. Gibson Armstrong (R-Lancaster), Lisa Thomas M.D. of Scranton, Rep. Steve Nickol (R-Hanover), David Simon, SVP and General Counsel for Jefferson Health System, Don Matusow of Philadelphia, Steven Shapiro, D.O., Chief of Pediatrics at Abington Memorial Hospital, Secretary of Revenue Gregory Fajt, Insurance Commissioner Diane Koken and Secretary of the Budget Michael Masch.

The Commission is required to submit a report to the Governor and General Assembly by Nov. 15. The report is to include recommendations for the continuation of the MCARE Abatement program, the elimination or phaseout of the fund and other provisions for providing adequate medical professional liability insurance, including a review of the Fund's future unfunded liability and financing options for retiring those unfunded liabilities.

“We applaud Governor Rendell and the entire General Assembly for creating this commission as a means of addressing one of the most significant barriers to attracting young doctors to Pennsylvania,” Port said. “The strength and quality of our healthcare system is directly linked to the cost of our medical liability system. If we can work to better control the costs of this system, we will help build a stronger healthcare system for Pennsylvania.”

POS is a professional medical specialty organization representing more than 1,000 orthopaedic surgeons across Pennsylvania. For more information, visit the POS website at www.paorthosociety.org.

This year POS celebrates its 50th Anniversary ***"50 Years and Growing Stronger"*** with a series of public education materials and activities highlighting the excellence of orthopaedic medicine in Pennsylvania and the importance of bone, joint and muscle health at every age.

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