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**ORTHOPAEDIC SURGEONS: MILLIONS SPENT IN HEALTHCARE**  
**DOESN'T HELP PATIENTS**

**HARRISBURG (May 3, 2005)** – The Pennsylvania Orthopaedic Society (POS)

President Paul Christopher Metzger, M.D. said a state agency report issued yesterday confirms that one of the highest costs of providing healthcare in Pennsylvania has nothing to do with patient care.

The Pennsylvania Health Care Cost Containment Council (PHC4) reported Pennsylvania hospitals spent \$636 million in 2004 for medical liability insurance coverage. The Research Brief includes hospital payments to the Medical Care Availability and Reduction of Error (MCARE) fund, payments to private insurers, payments to underwrite some portion of malpractice costs incurred by some physicians and other expenses not covered by insurance arrangements.

“This report is a stark reminder that millions of dollars in healthcare spending in Pennsylvania has taken a detour away from patient care and into mandated liability insurance,” Metzger said noting that these expenses do not include the millions of dollars spent by independent physicians. “It’s time to redirect our spending to where it’s going to do the most for our patients.”

The PHC4 report comes on the heels of an Associated Press account in March that a federal agency found Pennsylvania reached a record high of nearly \$450 million in medical liability payouts for physicians in 2004.

Just as hospitals, doctors and other healthcare providers are grappling with declining reimbursements for care provided and increasing expenses for innovative patient safety and state-of-the-art technology for improved patient quality, the cost of medical liability insurance continues to burden the healthcare system.

“We are seeing the precious resources available for healthcare dwindle just as our population ages and more technology and exciting treatments become available,” Metzger said. “Our patients deserve more than just a promise that they will have a right to sue, they deserve the right to quality healthcare and that means bringing balance to our medical liability system so we have more to invest on their care.”

Metzger noted that key reforms enacted in 2002 and 2003 and MCARE abatement have been important stabilizing factors in Pennsylvania. But the two recent reports show Pennsylvania continues to be a hostile medical liability environment.

POS is advocating for continued full MCARE abatement for high-risk specialty surgeons such as orthopaedic surgeons this year and other common sense liability reforms to improve Pennsylvania’s healthcare system.

POS is a professional medical specialty organization representing more than 900 orthopaedic surgeons across Pennsylvania. For more information visit the POS website at [www.paorthosociety.org](http://www.paorthosociety.org).

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