

July 16, 2009

Dear Physician:

As a physician for more than 20 years, I saw the problems in the health care system that you deal with today. We can all agree that the system needs changes – too many patients make unnecessary emergency room visits, reimbursement rates do not meet expenses and defensive medicine costs precious time and money.

However, the American Medical Association's announced support for a new, government-run bureaucracy in health care fails to achieve any of the reforms patients and doctors desperately need. Rather, the AMA's support trades short-sighted promises for meaningful long-term changes. Under the new health care system proposed as part of H.R. 3200, federal bureaucrats will have greater control over treatment options and reimbursement rates. The government must not tell doctors how to practice medicine and make coverage changes that deprive patients of needed care.

Thankfully, state medical associations are standing up to the AMA. In a news report today, 17 state associations broke with the AMA to express opposition to the government-run bureaucracy that the AMA supports. Citing use of "government-funded effectiveness tests or comparative effectiveness research," the coalition seeks to ensure physicians have access to the widest possible treatment options and provide the best quality care at an affordable rate. Strengthening the doctor-patient relationship remains the most effective way to reduce costs for patients and increase quality.

The AMA's short-sighted capitulation will increase costs for patients and doctors and lead to lower-quality care in coming years.

As a former physician, I encourage you to reach out to your state medical associations to let them know that you oppose a government takeover of health care and comparative effectiveness research denials based solely on cost.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read "C. W. Boustany, Jr.", written in a cursive style.

Charles W. Boustany, Jr., MD
Member of Congress