



PRESS RELEASE

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from the COLORADO MEDICAL SOCIETY

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COLORADO MEDICAL SOCIETY CALLS ON STATE LEGISLATURE TO SEIZE OPPORTUNITY WITH 208 COMMISSION FINAL REPORT FOR HEALTH CARE REFORM

DENVER— “With the delivery of the final report of the Blue Ribbon Commission on Health Care Reform, Colorado is poised to take the next step in addressing the complex problems that are facing our unsustainable health care system,” said Mark Laitos, MD, Co-chair of the Colorado Medical Society (CMS) Physicians’ Congress for Health Care Reform. “Legislators must seize this opportunity to have a transparent and substantive debate on fixing Colorado’s broken health care system.”

Physicians testified to the dysfunction of the current system and its impact on patients during numerous 208 Commission hearings around the state. “Doctors fully understand,” said Lynn Parry, MD, Co-chair of the CMS Physicians’ Congress. “The current system is unsustainable. Physicians have been preparing for years to have this discussion in the larger public arena and to have the legislature tackle systemic reform.”

CMS’ guiding principles (see attached) represent thousands of volunteer physician hours and two years of in depth policy work by the Physicians’ Congress. These principles identify what needs to be done to reform the system from the patient’s bedside and exam room up. From these guiding principles, the Physicians’ Congress created the Health Systems Reform Evaluation Matrix (see attached), a patient-centered policy diagnostic tool that has been and will continue to be used by CMS to evaluate health care reform proposals.

“The final report of the 208 Commission embraces many of the ideas in the evaluation matrix. The debate moving forward will not be just about coverage or just about doctors. It should be about making sure that any reform system provides Coloradans with quality, safe and cost effective care,” said CMS President-elect Ben Vernon, MD.

“The matrix does not address health care reform from an ideological perspective. We decided to evaluate every proposal for reform on how it will affect doctors caring for their patients. The matrix is all about finding the best possible plan for Colorado regardless of where it comes from or how it is financed,” said Dr. Laitos.

“The Colorado Medical Society pledges its full support to the legislature as it tackles health care reform and once again we strongly urge legislators to maintain the momentum created by the Blue Ribbon Commission. The time is now, for a bipartisan, vigorous debate on reforming our broken health care system because the current system is simply not sustainable and time is running out,” concluded Dr. Vernon.

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The Colorado Medical Society is a 137-year-old professional organization of over 6900 physicians dedicated to patient advocacy and excellence in the practice of medicine.

The Physicians’ Congress for Health Care Reform was created by CMS in 2006 to unite physicians in different specialties and different communities across Colorado in a strategy to achieve comprehensive health care reform.