



**A MESSAGE FROM CMS PRESIDENT MARK LAITOS, MD,  
ON FEDERAL HEALTH CARE REFORM**

**March 22, 2010**

By now you've probably heard that the U.S. House of Representatives passed HR 4872, the health care reform bill, last night (Sunday).

Like the American public, Colorado doctors were split on whether to support or oppose this bill. At the CMS Board of Directors meeting last Friday, March 19, the Board recognized the lack of consensus among our physician members, and did not take a stance on the bill itself. Rather, the Board recognized the five years of work done by CMS' Physician Congress on Health Care Reform, work that has been approved repeatedly by our House of Delegates. Based on the work of our CMS congress, we have been, and we intend to continue to, be a constructive participant in the reform debate.

The bill passed by Congress Sunday marks the beginning, not conclusion, of a robust debate on the future of health care in America. CMS has communicated our health care reform priorities over the past 18 months to the Colorado congressional delegation and urged individual physicians to express their views as well. I want to thank all physicians, medical students, and Connection

members who took the time to participate. Your continued involvement will be critical in the months ahead.

On Friday, March 19, the Board of Directors met to discuss what CMS should do in the event the legislation fails or passes. Based on the Board's agreement, we will immediately call on the Colorado congressional delegation to urge enactment of additional legislation that fixes the flawed Medicare physician payment system. Physician practices are struggling and many are closing their doors to Medicare patients. Health care coverage without access to physician services is an empty promise.

We will also quickly but thoughtfully compare the enacted legislation against CMS health care reform policies and identify what we like, what needs to be amended, and also what is missing in order for reform to be meaningful. As soon as it is completed, we will share this analysis with our members and the Colorado congressional delegation. We will also submit it in the form of a special report to the House of Delegates in September, where we anticipate yet another vibrant debate going into the 2010 election cycle. Over the next few weeks, please look for and respond to a CMS member survey to provide the Board with additional input as we move forward. As always, I welcome hearing from you.

Mark Laitos, MD  
President  
Colorado Medical Society