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FastTrack

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Access to health care must be preserved

At a September 16 news conference at the state Capitol, Pennsylvania's doctors and hospitals said that access to health care must be preserved, and asked lawmakers to extend Mcare abatement and to continue to work towards a compromise to expand coverage to the uninsured.

Republicans and Democrats came to a stalemate prior to the summer recess on how best to cover Pennsylvania's uninsured citizens. Unfortunately, the Mcare abatement extension, as well as the Pennsylvania Healthcare Cost Containment Council (PHC4) was tied to health insurance legislation; as a result, there is a political impasse which leaves physicians, the uninsured, and PHC4 caught in the middle.

"The Mcare Abatement Program has protected our healthcare system from the devastating effects of the medical liability crisis. Enacted in 2003, the program has helped thousands of doctors to continue to treat their patients. Without Mcare Abatement, there is a real possibility that doctors may consider leaving the Commonwealth to go to states with lower medical liability costs and higher reimbursements," said Jon B. Tucker, MD, President, of the Pennsylvania Orthopedic Society.



According to Craig Hillemeier, MD, vice dean of clinical affairs at the Penn State College of Medicine, lack of Mcare action could also impact physicians in training as well.

"The truth of the matter is that Pennsylvania is a net exporter of physicians to the rest of the country. Nearly two-thirds of the physicians that attend medical school in Pennsylvania will eventually practice medicine outside the state," said Dr. Hillemeier. "An unstable medical liability environment, coupled with a lack of Mcare relief, adversely impacts the decisions of Pennsylvania's medical students to stay in Pennsylvania



PaACEP President John Kelly, DO, FACEP, President-Elect Michael, Turturro, MD, FACEP, Governmental Affairs Committee Chair Theodore Christopher, MD, FACEP, and ACEP Council Speaker Bruce MacLeod, MD, FACEP, attended the event.

TAKE ACTION NOW

With only eight legislative session days left this year, the future of the Mcare abatement program is in jeopardy. Your involvement is needed to ensure that every legislator hears that Mcare relief is critical.

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