

UPDATE

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

November 5, 2009

Contact: Susanne Hartman

(202) 446-2028, shartman@neurosurgery.org

Neurosurgeons' Stand Firm: Protect Patient Access, Limit Government Intrusion New House Healthcare Reform Bill, H.R. 3962, Missing Key Ingredients for True Reform

(Washington, DC) –The [American Association of Neurological Surgeons](#) (AANS) and [Congress of Neurological Surgeons](#) (CNS) announced their opposition to H.R. 3962, the “[Affordable Healthcare for America Act](#),” currently under consideration by the House of Representatives.

“Sadly, in the ongoing healthcare reform debate, the more things change, the more they stay the same. We could not support H.R. 3200, the ‘America’s Affordable Health Choices Act of 2009,’ which was introduced in the House last July and unfortunately, we must now oppose this new House bill too. It contains no significant changes or improvements when it comes to the issues we believe are vital for true healthcare reform in this country,” comments **Troy M. Tippett, MD**, President of the AANS.

Gerald E. Rodts, MD, President of the CNS, further explains, “Once again, we have a bill that goes way beyond what is necessary to fix what is actually broken with our healthcare system. We cannot stress enough that instead of a huge ‘adjust everything’ approach, the proper path for lawmakers is to pursue a carefully targeted set of reforms.”

Specifically, in this legislation, the AANS and CNS are concerned that:

- Ultimately, the public health insurance option will lead to a single-payer, government run healthcare system;
- Due to its high price-tag, the health system envisioned is unsustainable;
- Under the public health insurance option, the government is empowered to implement rules that could restrict patients’ choice of physician and limit timely access to quality specialty care;
- The bill fails to recognize the looming workforce shortages in surgery by requiring that all unused medical residency training slots be allocated to primary care and placing the emphasis on national workforce policy on primary care, to the exclusion of surgical and other specialty care;
- The bill inappropriately expands the government’s involvement in determining the quality of medical care and residency training programs;
- The bill permits the government to arbitrarily reduce reimbursement for valuable, life-saving specialty care for elderly patients, threatening treatment options;
- Patient-centered healthcare may be threatened by provisions related to comparative effectiveness research, changes to office-based imaging and curtailing the development of physician-owned specialty hospitals; and
- The bill potentially stifles medical innovation and valuable continuing medical education programs.

Furthermore, this House bill fails to include **proven medical liability reforms**. Dr. Tippett states, “Last month, the nonpartisan [Congressional Budget Office](#) (CBO) released its findings which confirm that medical liability reform does indeed reduce the use of healthcare services and will save the system money, about \$54 billion over ten years. Congress needs to take action to end the practice of defensive medicine and eliminate frivolous lawsuits.”

Dr. Rodts adds, “Overall, we believe this legislation will ultimately limit patient choice by putting the government between the doctor and the patient which will interfere with vital patient care decisions. As it stands, this House bill could amount to a complete government takeover of healthcare.”

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To learn more about the neurosurgeons' view of healthcare reform, read the article, "[**A Candid Conversation with AANS President Dr. Troy Tippett.**](#)" For more information on the position of AANS and CNS on healthcare reform issues, visit: http://www.aans.org/legislative/aans/Neuro_HealthCareReform.asp or <http://www.cns.org/advocacy/wc/nsHealthcareReform.aspx>.

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The American Association of Neurological Surgeons (AANS), founded in 1931, and the Congress of Neurological Surgeons (CNS), founded in 1951, are the two largest scientific and educational associations for neurosurgical professionals in the world. These groups represent approximately 7,600 neurosurgeons worldwide. Neurological surgery is the medical specialty concerned with the prevention, diagnosis, treatment and rehabilitation of disorders that affect the entire nervous system, including the spinal column, spinal cord, brain and peripheral nerves. For more information, please visit www.aans.org or www.cns.org.