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MEDIA CONTACT
Lauren Slepian – 609-744-4794

Health Coalition Applauds Bipartisan Action on Medical Liability Reform

WASHINGTON, DC – The Health Coalition on Liability and Access (HCLA) today announced its support of H.R. 9584, the *Accessible Care by Curbing Excessive lawSuitS Act* (ACCESS Act), a comprehensive medical liability reform bill introduced by Representatives **Richard Hudson** (R- N.C.) and **Lou Correa** (D-Calif.).

The *ACCESS Act* is modeled after proven reforms already in place in Texas, California, and many other states around the country that have committed to affordable access to patient care by reducing medical lawsuit abuse.

The bill ensures full and unlimited recovery of economic damages for deserving patients for expenses such as lost wages, past and future medical expenses, rehabilitation costs, and other out-of-pocket expenses. The legislation also permits the additional recovery of up to \$250,000 for non-economic damages, such as damages awarded for pain and suffering.

Recent estimates from the Congressional Budget Office estimate that the provisions included in the bill would reduce total national health care spending by 0.5% and lower the federal deficit by \$27.9 billion over a 10-year period.

By enacting a reasonable statute of limitations for filing lawsuits, the bill will ensure a speedier resolution to claims. The *ACCESS Act* contains additional patient-friendly provisions to limit attorneys' fees so that damage awards are directed to patients in need. In addition, the legislation allows physicians to express sympathy for adverse outcomes without such condolences being used against them. Notably, the bill also protects the rights of states that have already enacted their own medical liability reforms or may choose to do so in the future.

"At the center of our broken medical liability system are high hurdles to accessible care and increasing costs. Serving the needs of our nation's patients now and in the future requires us to take action," said HCLA chair **Mike Stinson**. "The HCLA supports the *ACCESS Act* and applauds bipartisan efforts to reduce medical lawsuit abuse and enact a framework that works for patients and providers."

"The *ACCESS Act* gives families facing health care challenges the confidence and support they deserve. It will also help lower our federal deficit by \$27.9 billion over 10 years by enacting commonsense, much-needed reform, stated Rep. **Richard Hudson**. "I thank Congressman Correa for his partnership and am proud our bipartisan legislation has widespread support from organizations including HCLA."

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HEALTH CARE LIABILITY EXPERTS AVAILABLE FOR INTERVIEWS CONTACT

media@protectpatientsnow.org

For more details, visit www.hcla.org. The Health Coalition on Liability and Access is a national advocacy coalition representing physicians, hospitals, health care liability insurers, employers, health care providers and consumers. HCLA believes federal legislation is needed to bring fairness, timeliness and cost-effectiveness to America's medical liability system.