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**Health Groups Applaud Debt Commission Co-Chairs’
Support for Liability Reform**

Reducing Defensive Medicine Will Help Patients and Reduce Costs

WASHINGTON, DC – The Health Coalition on Liability and Access today applauded the Co-Chairs of the National Commission on Fiscal Responsibility and Reform for their endorsement of comprehensive medical liability reform in draft proposals of solutions to cut our national deficit over the next several decades. The coalition agrees that reform of our nation’s broken liability system should include reasonable limits on non-economic damages, which have a proven track record of success in states across the country.

“The HCLA is pleased that the Co-Chairs of the President’s Debt Commission recognize the importance of comprehensive medical liability reform,” HCLA Chair Mike Stinson said. “Medical liability reform must be a priority for the new Congress. Reform will not only help reduce the cost of defensive medicine and our skyrocketing deficits, but it will preserve access to quality care for all Americans,” Stinson added.

Chairmen Alan Simpson, a former Republican senator from Wyoming, and Erskine Bowles, former chief of staff to President Bill Clinton, released an initial proposal yesterday that included plans to reduce health care costs – one of which is to “pay lawyers less and reduce the costs of defensive medicine by adopting comprehensive tort reform.”

Estimates vary, but conservatively, a study in September’s *Health Affairs* journal placed the cost of our broken medical liability system at \$55.6 billion. A 2006 study by PricewaterhouseCoopers found that the cost was upwards of \$210 billion per year.

“The HCLA looks forward to working with the new Congress on comprehensive medical liability reform,” Mike Stinson said. “The current system costs too much, takes too long, and is designed to benefit personal injury lawyers, not patients,” he added.

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HEALTH CARE LIABILITY EXPERTS AVAILABLE FOR INTERVIEWS
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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 and health care providers and consumers. HCLA believes federal legislation is needed to bring fairness, timeliness and cost-efficiency to America’s medical liability system.