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Health Coalition Testifies on Critical Need for Liability Reform

WASHINGTON, DC – The Health Coalition on Liability and Access (HCLA) testified today before the Health Subcommittee of the House Energy and Commerce Committee in a hearing titled, “The Cost of the Medical Liability System Proposals for Reform, including H.R. 5, the Help Efficient, Accessible, Low-cost, Timely Healthcare (HEALTH) Act of 2011.”

Troy M. Tippet, MD, a Florida neurosurgeon representing the HCLA, emphasized to committee members that “our medical liability system is broken and it is time to protect patients now by passing H.R. 5 and passing it quickly.”

With neurosurgery topping the list of physicians most likely to be targeting by personal injury lawyers, Dr. Tippet understands the potential consequences of inaction. As he told Congress, “In the years ahead, we can expect this kind of avoidance behavior will inevitably lead to increasing shortages of doctors, particularly in high-risk specialties.”

Today’s hearing is the second this year to underscore the critical need to reform our nation’s broken medical liability system.

Medical liability reform would not only have a positive impact on access to care, it would help close an ever-widening budget gap. In a recent report, the Congressional Budget Office has determined that enacting comprehensive medical liability reform, including provisions included in the HEALTH Act, would reduce federal deficits by \$62 billion between 2012 and 2021.

“Reform the medical liability system before health care costs go higher and patient access to quality care worsens,” urged Dr. Tippet in prepared testimony. “Before defensive medicine and doctor shortages change the health care system that serves this country and its people so well. Before the doctor-patient relationship is irretrievably damaged. Before it’s too late.”

Troy M. Tippet, MD, is the Medical Director for the Neurosurgical Group in Pensacola, Florida and has been a practicing neurosurgeon for more than thirty years. Dr. Tippet is the Immediate Past President of the American Association of Neurological Surgeons and past president of the Neurosurgical Society of America. He is also past president of both the Florida Medical Association and the Florida Neurosurgical Society.

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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, health care providers and consumers. HCLA believes federal legislation is needed to bring fairness, timeliness and cost-effectiveness to America’s medical liability system.