



NEWS RELEASE

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Delaware Healthcare Association and Medical Society of Delaware Team Up to Push Health Care Reform Principles

The Medical Society of Delaware (MSD) and the Delaware Healthcare Association (DHA) believe that the time for serious reform of the health care system in Delaware has come.

Recent job losses and stagnant income experienced by our state's citizens in today's troubled economy have added to the burden Delawareans face when trying to access needed health care services. More and more people are facing the loss of health insurance or significant cost increases in the portion of private health insurance they are forced to shoulder for themselves and their families. Increasing Medicaid costs and enrollments are straining state budgets to the breaking point around the country – and here in Delaware. Hospitals struggle to pay for the miraculous treatment technologies and lifesaving health care services offered by caring and highly skilled physicians, nurses, and allied health professionals. The cost shifting this results in burdens those holding private insurance with escalating premiums and co-payments. This situation makes economic growth that much more difficult as entrepreneurs and business managers face higher hurdles and expenses when trying to achieve growth and job creation.

DHA and MSD are joining in a call to enact health care reform in Delaware according to principles developed by each organization. Those principles are designed to promote comprehensive health care coverage for all citizens in Delaware.

The work of both organizations has resulted in common principles for reform:

- **Guaranteed access to affordable health care coverage for all;**
- **Broadly based financing and elimination of financial impediments to receiving appropriate and timely care;**
- **Focus on wellness and preventative services;**
- **Reduction of administrative costs to refocus resources on direct and preventative care;**
- **The use of health information technology to increase accuracy and timeliness of health information;**
- **Focus on quality and improvement of outcomes;**

- **Acknowledgement of patient responsibility to encourage appropriate use of the health care system; and**
- **Explore better alternatives to today's liability system.**

MSD and DHA worked independently to develop these principles. MSD structured a taskforce of Delaware physicians who met for nearly a year to produce the Society's offering. DHA worked with other state hospital associations under the aegis of the American Hospital Association in preparation of their offering.

Both organizations decided that developing principles as opposed to specific plans would be the most productive path to take. Particularly in an election year, various candidates have prescriptions and plans for achieving health care reform – some of them quite detailed. MSD and DHA hope that their respective sets of principles will serve as a framework for decision making as Governor Markell and new General Assembly grapple with reforming our healthcare system.

Wayne Smith, President and CEO of the Delaware Healthcare Association, said that “in attempting to establish a common framework for decision making as health care initiatives are discussed, we seek to develop a checklist that proposals can be graded against to see if they will deliver broad coverage with an equitable burden that ensures that quality outcomes for all citizens and patients continues to be the top priority for the health care system.”

MSD President Dr. Nicholas O. Biasotto stated that “these principals represent the best thinking of frontline providers of health care in Delaware. Our state's physicians are aware of the great needs faced by the uninsured in this state as well as the requirements necessary to maintain an excellent, high quality, and effective health care delivery system.”

MSD and DHA will be sharing their principals with decision makers in an attempt to achieve broad consensus on the framework for structuring meaningful and successful health care reform in Delaware.

For detailed presentations of principals, see:

Medical Society of Delaware

<http://www.medicalsocietyofdelaware.org/AboutMSD/Initiatives/tabid/413/Default.aspx>

Delaware Healthcare Association

<http://www.aha.org/aha/issues/Health-for-life/index.html>

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