



March 21, 2016

The Honorable Trent Franks, Chairman
Subcommittee on Constitution and Civil Justice
House Judiciary Committee
U.S. House of Representatives
Washington, DC 20515

Dear Chairman Franks:

On behalf of the American Academy of Family Physicians (AAFP), representing 120,900 family physicians and medical students nationwide, I write to commend you for introducing the *Help Efficient, Accessible, Low-cost, Timely Healthcare "HEALTH" Act* (HR 4771) and to express our gratitude for your effort to reform professional medical liability. The AAFP recognizes that the nation's medical liability system continues to restrict patients' access to care and supports the HEALTH Act's significant reforms that will help repair the flawed medical liability system, reduce the growth of health care costs, and preserve everyone's access to medical care.

Analysis by the Congressional Budget Office [finds](#) that that tort reform could cut health care costs both directly and indirectly: directly, by lowering premiums for medical liability insurance; and indirectly, by reducing the use of diagnostic tests and other health care services when providers recommend those services principally to reduce their potential exposure to lawsuits. The proven reforms contained in the HEALTH Act will help reduce unnecessary expenses while ensuring that patients who have been injured due to negligence receive just compensation. This bill provides a balance of tort reforms by promoting speedier resolutions to disputes, maintaining access to courts, maximizing patient recovery of damage awards with unlimited compensation for economic damages, while limiting non-economic damages to \$250,000. At the same time, the HEALTH Act protects existing, effective state medical liability reform laws.

Thank you for your commitment to improve our nation's medical liability system. We strongly encourage the House Judiciary Committee to move quickly this week to approve this important bill for consideration by the House of Representatives. If we can provide further assistance in this effort, please contact Teresa Baker at tbaker@aafp.org.

Sincerely,

Robert Wergin, MD, FAAFP
Board Chair

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