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## **Broad Health Coalition Applauds President Obama's Commitment to Medical Liability Reform** *Calls on Congress to Enact Reform*

WASHINGTON, DC – The Health Coalition on Liability and Access today commended President Obama for acknowledging the need to reform our nation's broken medical liability system, and calls on Congress to follow the President's leadership by including reform in pending health care legislation.

Last night, in an address to Congress, President Obama said, "I've talked to enough doctors to know that defensive medicine may be contributing to unnecessary costs. So I am proposing that we move forward on a range of ideas on how to put patient safety first and let doctors focus on practicing medicine." The President indicated support for implementing regional or state reform demonstration projects.

"The HCLA applauds the president for his leadership on this important issue. True health care reform that reduces costs, increases access to care, and protects patients can only be achieved if it includes medical liability reform," said HCLA Chair Mike Stinson.

"President Obama's support for demonstration projects won't immediately address the serious problems created by our nation's broken medical liability system. Congress needs to enact meaningful federal medical liability reform. States that have enacted effective reforms have been, in effect, demonstration projects with a proven track record of success.

"Unfortunately, the powerful personal injury lawyer lobby has succeeded at blocking real reform at every turn, and the HCLA acknowledges the political realities we face. We are committed to reform however, and believe immediate, effective reforms should be enacted along with alternative state demonstration projects. We look forward to working with the Congress to codify the President's proposals in health care legislation as it moves through both the House and the Senate this fall," Stinson said.

Medical lawsuit abuse drives up the costs of health care and drives good doctors out of the practice of medicine. The fear of being sued has caused physicians to subject their patients to tests and procedures they may not need, driving up medical costs exponentially. According to a recent study by PriceWaterhouseCoopers' Health Research Institute, defensive medicine adds up to nearly \$210 billion per year in wasteful spending - the highest amount of waste in health care spending.

Further, good doctors are limiting their services, retiring early, or leaving the practice of medicine altogether, leaving patients without the care they need – especially in states without effective medical liability reforms. The situation is especially dire in the fields of obstetrics, emergency medicine and specialty surgery. Women and those living in rural areas are particularly vulnerable.

To read more about the HCLA's recent action on health care and medical liability reforms, visit [www.hcla.org](http://www.hcla.org).

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**EXPERTS AVAILABLE FOR INTERVIEWS -- CONTACT LAUREN SLEPIAN, 609-744-4794**

For more details, visit [www.hcla.org](http://www.hcla.org). The Health Coalition on Liability and Access is a national advocacy coalition representing doctors, hospitals, health care liability insurers, employers, health care consumers, and others. HCLA believes federal legislation is needed to bring fairness, timeliness and cost-efficiency to America's medical liability system.