



For Immediate Release – June 11, 2009
Contact: Jean Silver-Isenstadt, MD, PhD
Tel: 703-254-8972
e-mail: jean@npalliance.org

AMA Does NOT Speak for America's Doctors: NPA Supports Robust Public Health Insurance Option

In stark contrast to the oppositional view expressed by the American Medical Association (AMA), the National Physicians Alliance (NPA) strongly supports President Obama's call for a robust public health insurance option to be guaranteed in 2009 health reform legislation. "It is vitally important for the public to know that the AMA speaks for a minority of America's doctors," says NPA President Dr. David Evans, a family practice doctor in Madras, OR. "Their opposition to a public health insurance option comes as no surprise, given that they hired Ronald Reagan in the 1960s to demonize Medicare as 'socialized medicine.'"

The NPA represents more than 20,000 physicians across specialties and across the country. The four-year-old organization is working to create a genuinely inclusive, accessible, and patient-centered health care system. For too long, industry interests have outflanked the needs of patients. The NPA advocates patient choice: keep the private health plan you have if you like it, choose another private plan, or choose a quality public health insurance plan.

"A strong public health insurance option will increase transparency and force private health insurers to compete on a level playing field," says Dr. Valerie Arkoosh, an anesthesiologist and President-Elect of the NPA. "Physicians currently waste enormous amounts of time and resources hassling with private insurance company denials. At the same time, our patients are losing jobs and losing access to health care. I have a colleague, an oncologist, who is struggling to manage his many patients who have lost health insurance in the middle of their chemotherapy schedules. It is heartbreaking to work in a broken health care system. NPA physicians are determined to rebuild our system for the sake of our patients."

The AMA's physician-centered focus on reimbursement has long proved an obstacle to comprehensive health reform. The National Physicians Alliance offers a very different voice. Says NPA Policy Committee Chair and internist Dr. Christopher P. McCoy, "As a physician, I advocate first for what is best for my patients and believe that as long as I continue to maintain the trust and integrity of the profession, I will earn the respect of my community. The appropriate financial compensation for my endeavors will follow in kind."

###

United across medical specialties, the National Physicians Alliance seeks to restore physicians' primary emphasis on the core values of our profession: service, integrity, and advocacy. We work to improve health and well being, and to ensure equitable, affordable, high quality health care for all people.

To learn more about the National Physicians Alliance, visit <http://www.npalliance.org/>