

## NEWS RELEASE

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### **MMA SUPPORTS GOV. PAWLENTY'S CALL FOR COST STUDY OF DRUG MARKETING**

MINNEAPOLIS – The Minnesota Medical Association joined with Gov. Tim Pawlenty Thursday to call for the Federal Drug Administration to study the cost and impact on patients of direct-to-consumer marketing of drugs.

The governor has called for Congress to place a two-year federal moratorium on prescription drug advertising and has announced state legislation that would require drug companies to report the costs of their advertising to the state.

During the moratorium, the FDA would be required to examine the cost impact of direct-to-consumer marketing and make recommendations to improve existing regulation.

“This is an important issue and the governor is on track in calling for further study of how this affects the cost of health care,” said MMA President David Luehr, M.D., who is a family physician in Cloquet, Minn.

As a physician, Dr. Luehr appreciates well-informed patients who are active partners in their own care.

“To provide good health care, I need to discuss different drug options with patients and help them understand their medications,” Luehr said. Unfortunately, direct-to-consumer marketing can hinder, instead of help, this process,” he said.

“When a patient sees an ad that is more about a brand than a cure, it makes it harder for us to have a conversation about what’s the best treatment for them,” he said.

### **Background**

Since 1999, it has been a policy goal of the MMA to find the correct course for direct-to-consumer advertising so that it results in the best outcomes for the public, the individual patient and the doctor/patient relationship.

Minnesota physicians studied the issue of direct-to-consumer advertising as part of the MMA Pharmaceutical Issues Task Force in 2001.

Their conclusions were in line with the governor’s proposal today to further study the cost and patient care effects of direct-to-consumer marketing.

The Minnesota doctors on that task force saw the need to study the impact of direct-to-consumer advertising on the price of drugs and the attitudes of patients.

In that report, Minnesota physicians also called for the FDA to develop advertising guidelines to ensure the messages patients received were accurate, scientific and balanced.