

NEWS RELEASE

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**Contact: Lorrie Holmgren
612/599-9499**

PHYSICIANS SUPPORT HEALTHY MINNESOTA BILL

MINNEAPOLIS –The Minnesota Medical Association (MMA), representing more than 11,000 physicians throughout the state, today announced support for the legislative proposal developed by *Healthy Minnesota: A Partnership for Reform*, a broad coalition of elected officials, educators, physicians, and executive-level leaders of hospitals, health plans, clinics and consumer groups.

“The *Healthy Minnesota* bill is the most comprehensive health care reform proposal introduced in Minnesota in more than a decade,” said G. Richard Geier, M.D., president of the MMA. “It puts Minnesota on the road toward a more affordable, rational health care system with insurance for all Minnesotans by 2011.”

The proposal, which incorporates many of the MMA’s own reform ideas in the 2005 report, *Physicians’ Plan for a Healthy Minnesota*, was developed by a coalition of leaders that met for the first time in March 2006 and spent nearly a year developing the plan.

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“We commend the Partnership for their diligence and dedication in working to develop a sweeping vision of health care reform and specific legislation for 2007,” said Geier.

“These Minnesota leaders are devoting their time and energy to develop a better health care system for Minnesota.”

The 2007 Healthy Minnesota bill (S.F. 1689-Huntley/Prettner Solon) would require every Minnesotan to have health insurance, provide subsidies for those who can't afford insurance, and require insurers to offer insurance to anyone who applies for the basic health plan.

The proposal calls for funding to strengthen Minnesota's public health system and help providers in rural underserved areas implement health information technology. To prevent obesity, the bill would fund projects to encourage city and community planning that fosters active healthy lifestyles and would add a half credit in physical education to the high school graduation requirements.

The proposal would also create pilot projects for “medical homes” that would coordinate care, and link patients to specialty care and support services. Providers would be reimbursed in ways that not only encourage treating patients when they are sick but also keeping them healthy through disease management and team-based care. The pilot projects would test the potential of medical homes to improve care for patients with chronic diseases, which account for about 70 percent of health care spending.

“This legislation makes a firm commitment to a health care system for Minnesota that includes all citizens and puts the emphasis on keeping people healthy,” said Geier.

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The Healthy Minnesota plan envisions health care insurance for all Minnesotans, more affordable care and coverage, better health status, greater value, strong patient-clinician relationships and adequate, stable funding by 2011. The 2007 bill moves toward those goals.